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CORRESPONDENT IN SPAIN



# CORRESPONDENT IN SPAIN

by

*H. Edward Knoblaugh*

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Dedicated to Kent Cooper, General Manager of  
The Associated Press, whose honesty, fairness and  
keen perception are an inspiration to thousands of  
A.P. men engaged in gathering the news in every  
part of the world.



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## INTRODUCTION

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"CORRESPONDENT IN SPAIN" IS A COLLECTION OF OBSERVATIONS and experiences written by an American newspaperman who, as correspondent for the Associated Press in Madrid for more than four years, had a "ringside" seat at most of the events leading up to the conflict now drenching the Spanish peninsula in tears and blood.

Recently returned to the United States after more than eight months in the war zones, he has jotted down, in simple anecdotal style, some of the things he has seen and heard. Most of the information in this volume is strictly first-hand and challenges impeachment. Names are used except where their use might be extremely embarrassing to the principals because they are still in Spain.

The author watched the shifting political scenes in Spain beginning with February, 1933, and knew most of the leading figures intimately. He knew Francisco Largo Caballero as prisoner and as Premier. He saw Manuel Azana run the gamut of political vicissitudes, shunted from premiership to oblivion, carried back again to the heights of public adulation as president, and again being forced into virtual exile. He saw José Maria Gil Robles, a newspaperman like himself, climb to a post of highest power and then be forced to flee Spain in fear of his life. He interviewed Niceto Alcalá Zamora in the royal suite of the Presidential Palace and again in a Paris back-street walk-up furnished room when the Spanish president had become a political outcast.

Martinez Barrios, Primo de Rivera, Julian Besteiro, Indalicio Prieto, Juan Negrin, Goicoechea, Calvo Sotelo, Manuel Pestana, Jose Diaz and dozens of other political leaders were friends of long standing.

Twenty-eight cabinet crises occurred during his four years' stay in Spain. It was part of his job to cover the complexities of twenty-nine separate and distinct Spanish political parties. During the war he had carte blanche to the trenches of the Loyalists and the hide-aways of the Rightists until the incident he describes caused him to leave Spain.

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## FOREWORD

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WAR'S CRIMSON PALL HAD HUNG OVER SPAIN FOR MORE THAN a twelvemonth when these notes were being assembled. Beginning with a struggle between Right and Left, the war has long ceased to involve only Spain. The issues at stake have been made world issues and the world watches anxiously, hoping that the war will not spread. Heroics in international diplomacy have until this time prevented the grim tragedy of Spain from sweeping beyond Spanish borders but the menace of a widespread conflagration has not yet been dissipated. If anything, it has become more threatening in recent weeks. The effectiveness of the Nyon conference decisions has yet to be tested. It has been estimated that the blood of a million men has been spilled in Spain since July 18, 1936. Much more blood probably will flow before the titanic struggle for supremacy has been definitely decided.

Much has been written about the war but despite the barrels of printer's ink which have been consumed to this end, surprisingly little of an "inside" nature has reached publication. Some readers no doubt will find fault with parts of this volume, charging that it is one-sided in its insights of the war. I would like to have it distinctly understood at the outset that this book IS one-sided as far as the war is concerned. It could not be otherwise. I have seen only one side—that of the Loyalists, and this volume is limited to what I have seen there while covering the news for one of the world's largest press associations.

There is no conscious bias on my part. I have no personal interest in the war or its outcome. I have many friends fighting on both sides. Many of my friends have been killed defending one or the other cause. I take no position on the political aspects of the war. Both sides have their merits and their faults. That is something for their respective champions to debate. But having been on the one side, I know that many things happening on that side either have never reached print or have been so emasculated by censorship or colored by propaganda that a confusing, oftentimes deliberately inaccurate picture, has been presented. I have undertaken to write about some of these things as I knew them to be. The information in this volume will not be news to those who had the same opportunities for observation as I. I dare say that much of it will, however, be revealing to those who have placed abiding confidence in the news dispatches emanating from Loyalist territory.

H. E. K.

CORRESPONDENT IN SPAIN



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## CHAPTER I

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# The Stage Is Set for War: Background of Struggle

SHELLS WHINE, BOMBS CRASH AND SUNNY LITTLE TOWNS and villages are ground into bloody dust. In the cities, tall buildings lean crazily over huge craters. Two great armies sow death in each other's ranks with the most modern instruments of war. The soil reeks with the putrefaction of thousands upon thousands of fetid bodies. Hospitals are choked with the shattered forms of men, women and children. Hunger, misery and fear stalk the land. The Spanish war is reaching into its second year.

The unleashing of the war-dogs in Spain one year ago in July caught most of the world by surprise. There had been unmistakable indications that preparations for a decisive struggle between Right and Left were under way, but the general inclination was to discount or ignore them. Are not revolutions always brewing in Latin countries? And what if one does happen? The papers are full of revolutions in this and that Latin country. Two or three days or perhaps a week, while they fight it out, and then peace again. The eternal clash between the "Outs" and the "Ins," bored readers thought.

There had been a great variety of disturbing rumors, but foreign correspondents and other close observers of the Spanish situation were unable to pin them down to anything remotely resembling definition.



Seasoned followers of Latin politics know by experience that an announced trouble seldom materializes. Big news stories breaking in Latin countries rarely are advertised. Where rumors were concerned American correspondents in Madrid were confirmed skeptics and carefully avoided the pitfalls of "going off the deep end" on any of the myriad whisperings which constantly flooded the Spanish capital.

Even President Azana refused to heed warnings based on the rumors current in Madrid prior to the outbreak of the war. American Ambassador Claude G. Bowers, an astute newspaperman before he graduated into diplomacy, declined to attach any importance to them. He had run into dead ends when he tried to track down the many alarming reports reaching his ears.

Fortunate friendships among groups of all political persuasions in Spain gave me about as close an insight into developments leading up to the present conflict as any newspaperman could have. One of these fortunate contacts enabled me to write for the Associated Press the closest approach to anything like a forecast of what might happen that I have seen in print.

Pledged to secrecy by my informant, who was none other than Rightist leader José Maria Gil Robles, I could only hint in my story of what he advised me was in the air. The "tip," however, was the property of my Madrid office and we made careful preparations for "something big"—just how big we had no way of knowing. Gil Robles himself did not know at the time.

An unforeseen and unpredictable incident upset our closest calculations, however, and put an ocean between myself and Spain when the big thing we were awaiting—the launching of the military revolt against the newly elected Popular Front government—happened. That inci-

dent, curiously identical with the incident which precipitated the World War, was the killing of a Royalist.

We of the corps of foreign correspondents regularly stationed in Madrid had seen much water go over the political dam in the years we were there. The complications arising from the existence of twenty-nine separate and distinct Spanish political parties seldom were given much space in the American press, but we had to follow them closely and cover them fully for our Central and South American members.

In my three and a half years of reporting in Spain prior to the present war there had been twenty-eight cabinet crises, some "total" crises with complete ministerial shake-ups and others "partial" crises involving revampings of the government as the political pendulum swung back and forth in a wide arc between Right and Left. We did not realize it then, but the events we were chronicling during those turbulent years were so many steps leading up to the present war. A brief review of some of them reveals how inevitable was a supreme, decisive test for the mastery of Spain.

Nearly two years before I was assigned to Spain, the monarchy had been overthrown and the new Spanish republic set up. The figures who were principally active in the transition were still at the height of their power when I arrived in Madrid on February 13th, 1933.

Of these, Manuel Azana and Alejandro Lerroux were the most outstanding. Both were dyed-in-the-wool republicans. Azana was then Premier and Lerroux was the venerated chieftain of the misnamed Radical Republican party. Azana's liberal policies fitted in well with those of the Socialist-Republican government he headed, but Lerroux' republicanism was that of 1874. It was difficult for him to reconcile the new republic with the old, but he was trying.

The second republic had started its career at a most un-

propitious time. The world depression had just begun to upset Spain's isolated economy. Resultant unrest among the working classes had made Spain a fertile breeding-ground for subversive propaganda. Azana's government had a difficult time maintaining order. There was a rash of strikes, violence, church burnings and other disorders. Virtually all the news coming out of Spain during my first nine months there dealt with these disorders. Each day would see some new form of violence—some phase of industry tied up or some blood spilled. Rex Smith, then bureau manager of the Associated Press in Madrid, once quite appropriately remarked that it might save us time and cable tolls if we had stereotyped forms made for New York and referred to them by number in indicating repetitions of violence.

The Azana government found itself obliged to use strong measures to curb the disorders. One of these incidents caused Azana's overthrow. Thirteen anarchists, having barricaded themselves in a café called *Casa de Seis Dedos* in the little village of Casas Viejas, fired on the police. The head of the Casas Viejas constabulary asked Madrid for instructions. The Ministry of Interior sent orders to the effect that the place should be cleaned up: "we want neither prisoners nor wounded." The police took these orders literally. Not one of the thirteen escaped alive.

The extreme Left took up Casas Viejas as their war cry. The thirteen men who had been killed by police bullets became martyrs. Public opinion was so aroused that, following Spanish tradition, it ended in reaction. The Right-Centre coalition of the then unknown newspaperman, José Maria Gil Robles, carried the November, 1933, elections in a sweeping upset. Azana was ousted. Gil Robles, by virtue of heading the largest parliamentary minority—the Popular Action group with 112 of the 473 Cortes votes—was first

in line to succeed him. But President Niceto Alcalá Zamora, although a strong Catholic, did not deem it wise to encourage a Right trend in parliament at that time. Instead, he named Lerroux, the veteran, to the post of Premier.

Gil Robles insisted that his party have cabinet representation, however, and two Popularists were given posts. The Left bitterly protested this succession to power of the Robles clan. December saw rioting in Catalonia, Aragon and parts of Andalusia. These outbreaks were promptly suppressed, but the extreme Left made no secret of the fact that it was preparing for an armed uprising of major proportions. Some time afterwards, discoveries of large stores of arms hidden in various strategic spots confirmed the recurrent reports that revolution was brewing. One of the largest cachés was found under bleacher seats at Madrid's University City, which two years later was to become a battleground.

On October 6, 1934, the Left made, by force, its bid for power. A revolutionary general strike was declared. The signal for revolt given. The uprising centered in Asturias, where a "soviet" was established by extremist miners, and in Barcelona, where Luis Companys, doughty little President of the semi-autonomous Catalonian government, attempted to set up an independent republic within the federal government. On orders of Minister of War Diego Hidalgo the army was called out. Within 48 hours it succeeded in crushing the Companys movement. I covered the fall of the barricaded Generalitat building after a 300 mile dash from Madrid in a taxicab—the only transportation I could find. The strike had affected train, plane and cab service, but an independent chauffeur took the chance for double the usual pay. Our car was fired on as we went through Zaragoza, then an extremist hotbed, but we were not hit.

The Asturian movement was far more serious. It took a fortnight to restore order in Oviedo and the neighboring towns. For weeks afterward there was fighting in the hills. Our Oviedo correspondent joined the rebels at the start and forgot all about sending news. The last we heard of him he had taken to the hills for a final desperate stand. He must have been killed, for we never heard from him again. Our coverage was supplied by Arturo Cardona, a veteran staff man, who went along with the Legionnaires. Oviedo, one-time capital of the little Kingdom of the Asturias, suffered heavily during the time the red flag floated over it. The official report showed 1,335 dead and about three times that number wounded. The town's business section was a shambles. Seven hundred-and-thirty buildings were destroyed, some by government artillery but most of them by incendiaries. Some idea of the quantities of arms which had been brought into Spain for the revolt may be gained from the fact that in Asturias alone the government forces rounded up nearly 90,000 rifles, 33,000 pistols and revolvers, and some half-million rounds of ammunition.

In Madrid there were sporadic disorders but no concerted uprising. Dusk each day brought sniping from rooftops, which was answered by troops in the streets, but there were few casualties. One night the fighting became so sharp that we expected another Oviedo in Madrid. Smith called for a volunteer to go to the American embassy; we needed a flag to protect our office in case of an assault by the mobs rioting in various sections of the city. Being a single man, I went, but not without some qualms. There being no form of transportation service in operation, it meant a mile-and-a-quarter walk up the Castellana boulevard, where the shooting was thickest. Pedestrians had to walk with hands up. My arms were heavy as lead by the time I reached the embassy.

Ambassador Bowers had a good-sized American flag ready for me, wrapped in paper and tied with string. As I started the return journey to our office in Mejia Lequerica street, he wished me well. I was stopped three times by assault-guards who carefully examined my package before allowing me to proceed. Two women had been arrested on the same street a little while before and the market baskets they were carrying were found to be full of bombs.

When I finally got back to the office, where my colleagues were waiting anxiously, I breathed a sigh of relief. It rather irritated me when the situation eased up the next day and we had no occasion to use the flag. The bit of bunting was to serve us well later on, though, so my trip wasn't wasted. It was the only thing which saved our office from being mistaken for a sniper's nest during the first days of the big war two years later.

After the October uprising the government's first step toward restoring order in Madrid was to command striking transportation workers to go back to work. When the order was ignored, the army and assault-guard corps were called upon to man the surface lines and subway, and to keep the power plants operating. When several busses and street cars had been burned by extremists armed with bottles and benzine, the military took no chances with any of their passengers. Conductors held service revolvers ready in one hand while they collected fares with the other. Soldiers with rifles rode the front and rear platforms.

There were several amusing incidents arising from the unfamiliarity of some of the young soldiers and assault-guards with the routes their cars and busses were to follow. Those who lived in Madrid knew the route numbers but those from the provinces did not. I boarded a tram on the Gran Via one night and we stopped for ten minutes at the Cibeles intersection while the improvised crew argued

whether they were supposed to take the car east out Alcalá street or turn north and follow the Castellana. They finally settled the question by appealing to the passengers. Another night, when I was headed for a friend's house in Velazquez street, I asked the young soldier-motorman if the car went up Goya street. "I don't know," he replied with a laugh. "We'll decide that when we get there."

Nearly 30,000 Leftists were put in prison for participation in the October revolt. Among these was Francisco Largo Caballero, 63-year-old chief of the Revolutionary Socialist party and President of the U.G.T., who was the alleged chief instigator of the movement. Largo was found behind a cupboard in his home. Indalicio Prieto, fiery Basque orator credited with heading the Asturian movement, lived up to his reputation as Spain's "greatest escape artist." There are various accounts of how he has succeeded in crossing the frontiers when he felt the Spanish climate too warm. Once he is credited with fooling the frontier guardsman by dressing as a woman, with flowing skirts. On another occasion, so the story goes, he used a priest's garb to cover his portly frame. This time, so the best authenticated version relates, he entered France as a fighting bull!

Six bulls are used in a *corrida* (except on special *fiestas*, when there are eight). An extra bull is always shipped along in case one of the others is lamed during shipment or turns out to be cowardly in the ring. Seven bull crates, huge reinforced boxes, were checked across the frontier at Hendaye for a carnival spectacle in France just at the time Prieto vanished. The story is that Prieto succeeded in bribing someone to let him occupy the seventh crate and the extra bull stayed home.

By the first of November, 1934, a relative peace had settled over Spain. There were still some minor disorders,

but nothing in comparison with the violence which had marked the previous months. Gil Robles demanded and was granted a place in the new government of Alejandro Lerroux. Not only *a* place but *the* place he wanted—the Ministry of War. As war minister he ruled with an iron hand. Violence disappeared from Spain for the next year. The Left, stung by its defeat of October, abandoned force as a weapon and fell back on parliamentary obstruction. The repressive measures adopted by the government during the revolt was the peg upon which the Left Wingers hung their new program of attack.

Frequent interpellations on this subject were extended into long filibusters, blocking the Right-Centre's attempt to introduce legislation concerning any of the more important social reform measures on its program. By boycotting the sessions during voting, the Left forced the government to risk its head in what is known in Spain as the "parliamentary guillotine" on each occasion when Rightist-sponsored legislation reached the balloting stage.

The "guillotine" was a Left-invented legislative weapon fashioned during the first Azana government. It is effective against boycotts, but is dangerous because it demands an absolute majority of all those sitting. Failure to reach this majority is tantamount to a vote of censure and the government's resignation is automatic. Naturally only those measures which the government was certain to carry by an absolute majority were given the "guillotine" test.

Meanwhile the outward calm continued. The year saw several disquieting rumors. None of them materialized. The American colony settled down to enjoy relief from the strikes which had made life in Madrid, prior to this time, a series of recurrent annoyances. We had had to go without one or more conveniences for such a long time that it seemed strange now to have everything running so



smoothly. During the preceding years we had become accustomed to the strikes. If the cafés weren't closed, the taxis weren't running because of some *huelga*. If the roof started leaking or the elevator broke down, we set out buckets or patiently climbed stairs until the *huelga* had been settled. Strikes periodically kept bread, meat and vegetables off our table, closed the theaters, and delayed appointments. If there weren't revolutionary strikes with plenty of gunpowder, there were passive strikes—*huelgas de los brazos cruzados*—the “folded-arms” strikes—godfather of the American “sit-down.”

Now industry hummed, transportation was reliable, and it was safe to go out on the streets. It seemed to be too good to be true. Far too good, in fact, to suit the opposition, which cast about for some fresh weapon to use against the Lerroux-Gil Robles combine. The Asturian repression theme no longer kindled the populace. Strategy called for the undermining of public confidence in the old Conservative's government. The gods sent Daniel Straus.

Straus, affable Mexican-naturalized Hollander, had gained quite a name as a promoter of sporting events in Europe. My first contact with him was in Barcelona, where he promoted the Schmeling-Uzcudun fight in May, 1934. I met him again in the lobby of the Hotel Ritz in Madrid some weeks later. Supposing some new sport promotion project to be under way, I asked him what was up.

“Nothing like that Barcelona fiasco,” he told me. “I lost money on that. This is something worthwhile. I can't tell you what it is yet. Give me your card. When the story's ripe I'll let you in on it first.”

I did not see him again until the following October. He was seated in the diner on the Barcelona-Madrid night express, and his companions were Pich y Pons, then mayor of Barcelona, and two other men with whom I was not

acquainted. Straus had his back towards me and was talking in a low and confidential manner. Hoping I might learn something, I sent my card over to his table. Instead of inviting me to his table he came over to mine.

"That story isn't ripe yet but it will be soon," he said, as he sat down. "I can given you an idea of what it is all about. Spain is going to back Monte Carlo off the map. Do you follow me?"

"Gambling," I retorted, "is strictly out in Spain and has been for years."

"That's all right. We'll put it back in. Big stuff. Casinos in San Sebastian, Palma Mallorca, Barcelona, Madrid. There is a fortune in revenues the government is overlooking. Look at St. Jean de Luz. Why let the Frenchmen have it all?"

"It has been tried before," I reminded him. "The people have always been against it. Lerroux has turned down several big syndicates which made fancy offers. You won't be able to get a concession."

Straus leaned very close and pointed his thumb over his shoulder. "You see that young fellow seated by Pich y Pons? That's Aurelio Lerroux—the Premier's nephew. Lerroux likes his nephew so well that he has adopted him as his son. Whatever Aurelio says goes with the old man. We've got him in on it and a lot of other big shots. It can't miss. When the time comes, you'll get your story and it'll be a knock-out. It means millions, boy, millions!"

I didn't see Straus again nor did I hear from him. When, some weeks later, we received a small news-item from our man in San Sebastian to the effect that the Casino had been thrown open there the night before but had been closed by the police a few hours later, I thought:

"Straus let me down. Serves him right."

I had completely forgotten the incident when, some

seven months later, one of our Spanish reporters covering a routine session of congress, called me excitedly.

"Zamora sent note to congress . . . demands investigation . . . something about a gambling concession . . . no details available yet but looks as though Lerroux and a lot of others are mixed up in it. . . . Zamora says some promoter claims he paid 350,000 pesetas for concession but was closed up as soon as he opened . . . wants his money back. . . ."

It must be Straus, I thought. I took a chance and in my first bulletin mentioned Straus as the probable principal. Next day I found I was correct in my supposition. The lid was off the story. The old Premier succeeded in clearing himself of guilt so far as actual receiving of bribe-money was concerned, but his nephew and others close to him were in it up to their ears. They dragged the old man down with them in their disgrace. The opposition's prayer was answered.

The sensational scandal paved the way for the Left to put pressure on President Alcalá Zamora to dissolve the Cortes. The president was in a difficult situation because the constitution provides that a president can dissolve the Cortes only twice during his six-year tenure, and that he is subject to impeachment if he cannot justify the second dissolution before the new Cortes. He had dissolved the Constitutional Cortes in 1931, but did not believe that should count as a regular dissolution because it affected only a constituent assembly. If it did count, as some contended, then Alcalá Zamora would be obliged to answer for this second dissolution before the new Cortes. Should he succeed in justifying it, he would remain in office; his dissolution prerogatives, however, would be exhausted and he would have no weapon over parliament.

It was an interesting point. The authorities on constitu-

tional law we secured opinions from were about equally divided as to whether a Spanish constituent assembly is a regular parliament. As it turned out, the issue was not raised. Zamora felt he had no alternative except to dissolve the Cortes and call for new elections. He issued the decree on January 7, 1936. The elections were set for February 16. That act was his political death warrant. Three months later to the day he was ousted from office.

Azana, meanwhile, had been in eclipse. Out of the political limelight, his name had been heard only for a brief moment since the fall of 1933. That was when he appeared in the Cortes chamber and, by a masterful defense, saved himself from going to prison as an alleged accomplice of Companys in the Barcelona revolt of October, 1934. He had been in Barcelona before and during the uprising, and had held numerous conferences with Companys. His defense was one of the finest bits of oratory I have ever heard. It had its effect, and Azana was exonerated. Now he blossomed out in a new role—one that was to carry him to the Presidency. He organized the Left Popular Front. Socialists, Anarchists, Communists and Left Republicans were summoned to his banner. The Rightists vowed that it could not be done, but Azana welded the groups. The feat earned him the admiration of even his bitterest enemies. The Socialists and Communists had reached an *entente*, but the Left Republicans and the Anarchists were as far apart as the stars, and they in turn had nothing in common with the Socialist-Communists. In getting these discordant elements together Azana lived up to his reputation as the shrewdest and cleverest politician in Spain.

I heard him address his first big mass meeting in Madrid. It was the largest crowd Spain had ever seen. Two hundred thousand or more men and women came from near and far to hear the new Messiah of the Left promise to lead them

to victory if they would only bury their hatreds until after the elections. They came, suspicious and doubtful. They went away, cheering. The government, not conceiving how such a congregation of traditional enemies could assemble without rioting, had mounted machine guns at every entrance of the great field south of the capital. They were not needed. Azana had achieved the impossible.

Still and all it did not look as though Azana's loosely united Front had the ghost of a chance against the well-organized machine of Rightist leader Gil Robles. Gil Robles' campaign cry was "Give me all the power and I will save Spain." It seemed inevitable that he *would* have "all the power" after the elections. It is doubtful if Azana himself was very sanguine of his own prospects, but he kept up a brave show of optimism.

The election campaign was short but bitterly fought. While Gil Robles promised social reforms to bring a new era of prosperity to Spain, Azana pledged immediate amnesty for the political prisoners and distribution of the landed estates. Finally the eve of the elections rolled around. We did not realize it then, but we were about to chronicle a surprise that was to echo around the world. The history that was to be made the following day was to do more to change Spain than anything since the Roman conquest. What we had seen was to be nothing compared to what we were destined to see as the result of February 16.

Gil Robles went down in defeat that day. His powerful Popular Action combine, believed by all observers to be irresistible, had not reckoned with the vagaries of the Spanish electoral code. First returns that night indicated it would win—as Gil Robles had predicted—by an overwhelming majority. Rightist votes started streaming in early. Hour after hour they continued to pile up. Spain went to bed that night believing Azana's Popular Front had made a

noble but futile effort. Most of the foreign correspondents figured it that way, too. Many of them called it a day at 2 a.m., wrote a final "lead" conceding the Rightists the victory they had predicted, and went home.

A few of us, however, obeying one of those strange hunches which newspapermen sometimes have, stuck on at our desks, patiently counting returns and checking the urban and provincial electoral slates. Worn out by the strenuous campaign, sleep seemed the most desirable thing in the world to us. It seemed foolish, but a hunch is a hunch.

About 4 o'clock in the morning of February 17 our wait was rewarded. A sudden shift in the returns from certain key provinces first wiped out the Rightist lead and then, gaining necessary margins to carry the "majority" and "minority" Leftist slates to victory in the more populous areas, turned the tide in one of the greatest upsets any of us had ever seen. The electoral code, which had been invented by the Left in 1932 so that it would always stay in power, had boomeranged against them in the 1933 elections when Gil Robles' coalition had won. Now it again did the unexpected. Essentially a "trick" system, with "majority" candidates obliged to poll 40 per cent and the "minority" candidates to poll 20 per cent of the entire vote of their respective constituencies or go down in defeat, the existing code had been branded by all political leaders as "unwieldy and unfair." Because it might easily turn the tables on the actual balloting, as it did in this case, its revision had been demanded by Left and Right wings alike. The dissolution of the Cortes moved up the elections, however, and there was no time to legislate the new and more representative voting systems for which a tentative draft had been prepared.

Left extremists had feared the eccentricities of the exist-

ing electoral code and in many districts resorted to violence at the polls to insure against a Rightist victory. There were disorders in a number of areas. Voters were terrorized and many glass ballot "urns," as they are called in Spain, were broken and their contents burned. Despite these measures the Right polled 4,570,000 votes to the Left's 4,356,000. The Centre, allied with the Right coalition, polled 340,000, giving Gil Robles a combined majority of more than a half million votes. The victory, as our examination of the electoral slates revealed to us, would, however, go to the Popular Front. The tricky electoral system had served the Front in good stead. It had won a majority of the seats, if not of the votes.

When the Leftist masses were told, on their awakening February 17th, that they had won, they did not wait for the official reports of the electoral commissions scheduled for February 20th. They immediately began a series of demonstrations against Rightists and Rightist property. A wave of church spoliations and convent burnings swept Spain. The Portela Valladares cabinet collapsed and the "Segunda Vuelta," or run-off elections were a mere formality. Fresh violence marked centers where voting was close. In several places where Rightists had won, signally Granada and Salamanca, the elections were nullified.

I had almost laughed at Francisco Largo Caballero, veteran leader of the Socialist-Communist party when he had told me, in an interview in his cell while still prisoner for his part in the Left revolt of October, 1934:

"We will win at least 265 seats. The whole existing order will be overturned. Azana will play Kerensky to my Lenin. Within five years the republic will be so organized that it will be easy for my party to use it as a stepping stone to our objective. A union of Iberian Soviet republics—that is our aim. The Iberian peninsula will again be one country.

Portugal will come in, peaceably we hope, but by force if necessary. You see here behind bars the future master of Spain! Lenin declared Spain would be the second Soviet Republic in Europe. Lenin's prophecy will come true. I shall be the second Lenin who shall make it come true."

This declaration was most revealing in the light of what was to follow.

Fearing that Largo Caballero, if the reaction to his sensational statement were unfavorable enough, might attempt to repudiate it, I played safe against a "kick-back." Before I filed it, I submitted the cable containing the interview to him in the presence of one of his lieutenants, Maximo Fernandez. When Maximo, a Communist writer with a reading knowledge of English, confirmed my translation into Spanish, Largo heartily approved it. Taking an extra precaution, I took to Largo a newspaper clipping of his statement as translated into Spanish and printed on page one under a banner-line by the New York Spanish language newspaper, *La Prensa*. He again endorsed it. Months later, during a reception for President Azana in the Valencia Ayuntamiento, I asked Largo, then Premier, if he remembered the interview. Cocking an eye at me, the 64-year-old former plasterer said with a sly grin:

"Yes, I remember. I've been trying to live it down ever since."

Largo Caballero was either an excellent prophet or a good guesser on the voting outcome. The Front won exactly 265 of the 473 Cortes seats in the first balloting and increased its strength in the run-offs by 31 more seats. Spain was launched on a new era of Leftist rule which was to make more news copy than the country had ever before produced.

A great clamor went up from the victorious Left to free the political prisoners. An amnesty bill was hastily drafted



but the extremists would not wait for its passage. Daily demonstrations were staged. Those within the prisons, realizing liberty was at hand, rioted in their cell blocks. When jailers finally reported they could no longer handle the mutinous men, Manuel Azana, elevated to the Premiership as a reward for his great feat in uniting the discordant elements within the Front, decreed immediate release for all those held for political offenses. Free after eighteen months of confinement, those embittered thousands turned against the powers they felt were responsible for their having been so long deprived of liberty. More churches and convents were burned. More Rightist centers and newspapers were destroyed. Many of the formerly powerful political leaders hastily sought safety in exile.

Believing President Niceto Alcalá Zamora's conservatism to be an obstacle to the new Left program, the Cortes unceremoniously ousted him eighteen months before his six-year term was to expire. Azana, hailed as the "greatest republican," stepped into Zamora's shoes.

Peasants, eager to garner the fruits of victory without delay, seized the vast estates of the great landowners before the new government could get its machinery for legal expropriation under way. Sixty thousand of the *campesinos* seized virtually all the great estates forming Badajoz province, driving off the landlords or overseers and parceling the lands among themselves. A half-hearted attempt to eject the squatters was made. Following an armed clash between the *guardia civil*, traditional arbiters of order in the provinces, and a group of peasants who had seized a section of timber in Jaen, the government realized the danger of antagonizing the masses and called off the police. Workers who had been discharged for participating in the October, 1934, revolution demanded reinstatement and full pay for the intervening months. When employers protested

this would bankrupt them, a siege of strikes gripped the country. Building and transportation alternately were at a standstill and there was much sabotage. Workers took over those factories unable to operate under the terms they dictated.

According to a report Gil Robles read in the Cortes during an interpellation of the government on disorders occurring in the first four months of *Frente Popular* rule, 160 churches had been totally destroyed and 251 partially destroyed; 43 Rightist newspapers had been burned; 69 Rightist centers destroyed and 28 churches sealed.\* In addition, a large number of convents and convent schools were totally or partially destroyed. Scores of homes of Rightist leaders were attacked and their furniture thrown into the street, where huge bonfires were lighted.

We in Madrid had an opportunity to watch the siege of disorders at close range. Night after night, the sky hung heavy with a pall of smoke, as the torch of the incendiary was applied. The shouting mobs gathered before the flaming buildings refused to permit firemen to get into action. They slashed the fire hose and threatened violence to any fire-fighter attempting to rescue the religious works within the doomed buildings. Watching the flames shoot high from the church of San Luis, near the Ministry of Interior, on the night of March 13, I saw one fireman clubbed into unconsciousness as he pulled a statue toward the doorway. Another night, standing in front of the burning Rightist newspaper, *La Nacion*, I saw the mob hack firehose into ribbons, while they held back the firemen until the building was destroyed.

There was as yet relatively little bloodshed, although there were numerous sporadic clashes between Right and

\* These figures, a matter of parliamentary record, never have been denied.

Left Extremists. The sessions of the chamber of deputies were opened and closed with the singing of the *Internationale*. Rightist deputies attempting to take the floor were jeered and booed to silence. Reprisal shootings took the lives of a number of minor leaders on both sides. Police were powerless to cope with the terrorism. Nervousness increased on all sides, and as it mounted, capital began to leave the country. The peseta wavered in the face of this outflow. As a result of the uncertainty hanging over the nation, business trends became more pessimistic. There was much packing of suitcases among the wealthy classes.

This was the atmosphere, then, late in May, 1936, when I began to think about the vacation my office had promised me after more than four years of continuous, nerve-racking labor. I went to the headquarters of the Popular Action party in Serrano Street,\* just around the corner from our office and only two blocks removed from the Ministry of War. Up a flight of marble steps I went, directly to the offices of Gil Robles on the second floor of the rambling structure. I had known Gil Robles when he was a newspaperman like myself. I had watched his climb to power as head of Popular Action and had been on friendly terms with him when he was Minister of War. I had seen him only once since his fall. I had gone then to ask him about his parliamentary program.

"We will not have to make plans very far in advance," he had told me. "This situation cannot continue. The Communists and Anarchists are planning to overthrow the republic and establish a soviet regime. My followers will not tolerate this. They will act first."

"A military *coup d'etat* by one of your generals, perhaps General Franco, your former chief-of-staff?" I suggested.

\* Now used as general headquarters of the Communist Party.

"Francisco Franco is not the man," Robles had replied. "It has been proposed to him and he refused. He said 'not all the water in the Manzanares could wash out the stain of such a move.'"

"Who, then?" I had asked.

"There is no one now in sight strong enough to carry out such a thing," Robles had answered. "But someone will appear—how long it may take I do not know."

This bright May day I walked into his office and asked him bluntly:

"I want to know whether it will be safe for me to go home on vacation this summer."

Gil Robles looked at me keenly. "What makes you think it wouldn't be safe?" he asked.

"Let's be honest," I told him. "I feel something in the air—just what it is I don't know. But it's important to me to know whether it's going to happen soon or not—that matter you spoke to me about before. You can rely on my utmost confidence."

Gil Robles passed his hand over his bald spot, let his hand fall down over the bridge of his nose, and regarded me for a full minute without saying a word. Then, quietly:

"When did you plan to go on this vacation?"

"I had thought sometime in August," I answered, then waited while he again subjected me to that sphinx-like, penetrating gaze.

"You'd better let your vacation go until next summer, my friend," he said at last. My heart fell.

"I could go earlier—say, in July?"

Again Gil Robles gave me that keen searching look, and was a long time in replying.

"Early in July—early enough to be back before the middle of August?" Gil Robles' eyes had narrowed and he was not looking at me. He was gazing through the

southwest window at the palace once occupied by the Prince of Peace, but which now housed the Ministry of War.

That was it!

"Yes, sir, I'll be back by that time. Sure. Adiós and many, many thanks." My Spanish came out in an exultant flood as I turned toward the door. I had it! It was as clear as day! Whatever the Rightists were about to spring was scheduled for around the middle of August. What a story! But I had given my word.

I had my hand on the door handle when I heard a quick step behind me. Gil Robles was at my side.

"I have told you this because I think I can trust you. Is it true that I can?"

"Not a word." I promised. I kept that promise.

It was the 14th of July. I was in mid-ocean, bound for home at last. The day was cloudless and warm. I was utterly carefree as the ship ploughed through the slight swell. I had calculated my time carefully. I would arrive on the 17th of July and would be back in Spain by the end of the first week in August, rested and refreshed. Let happen then whatever was going to happen. I would be ready for it.

"Have you seen the ship newspaper this morning?" an Oregon lumberman who was my table mate asked me as I came down to breakfast.

"Not yet," I said. "Anything doing?"

"Had some trouble where you just came from. Killed a man by the name of Calvo something-or-other. Monarchist leader, I believe it said he was. Wait, here's the paper."

A squad of assault-guards had kidnapped Calvo Sotelo, monarchist leader and outstanding critic of the Popular Front administration, from his home the night before. His

body, covered with knife and bullet wounds, was found in the East cemetery of Madrid at dawn.

Thus had been fulfilled the ominous prophecy of Communist deputy Dolores Ibaruri—"La Passionaria"—in the Cortes a week before when, after Calvo had interpellated the government on the disorders, she had shouted:

"That's the last speech you'll ever make!"

Gil Robles and Antonio Goicochea, leader of the monarchist party *Renovacion Española*, we learned later, had also been marked for death that night. They had not been at home when the assassins came for them and thus had saved their lives.

"That, my friend, makes it look as though my vacation is going to be completely spoiled," I said disconsolately.

"Why?" the Oregon man asked.

"Because it may be the spark that will set off the whole shebang," I told him. And it was! Sarajevo repeated after twenty-two years!

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## CHAPTER II

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### The Curtain Is Lifted

TWO DAYS AFTER I ARRIVED HOME I RECEIVED ORDERS TO return immediately to Spain. Francisco Franco, the general who had been Gil Robles' Chief of the General Staff during what the Leftists referred to as "The Black Biennium," and who Gil Robles had asserted "was not the man" to head a military uprising, had, nevertheless, undertaken just that mission. Franco, in virtual exile in the Canary Islands (limbo for Spanish generals regarded as potentially dangerous), was led by the assassination of Calvo Sotelo to risk executing the Rightists' half-formed plan for a *coup d'etat*.

It started in Spanish Morocco on July 17. Within thirty-six hours it had leaped the Strait of Gibraltar to the mainland. Although prematurely hatched, the rebellion looked as though the very surprise of its launching would carry it to success before I could get back. At the prospect of missing the biggest story which had broken in Spain since my arrival four years before, I cursed my luck. If I had had a crystal ball I would not have been so impatient. The story that had broken during my absence was to be headlined for months to come.

As my ship sped toward Cherbourg I recalled, as best I could, what I knew of this man who had put himself at the head of the Rightist uprising. I had visited General

Franco several times for interviews while he was chief of the General Staff but had known him only slightly. He had been most difficult to see. When one did get past his underlings in the Ministry of War, Franco rarely had said anything for publication.

There were few, even among his closest acquaintances, who could say they knew Franco intimately. He kept himself aloof from his subordinates, but his ample qualification for his post had caused him to be deeply respected. He was known as a stern disciplinarian, a hard worker and a man of quick decisions. Once having determined upon a course of action, Franco could not easily be swerved from it. His whole life had been spent in the army. His every thought was for the army.

A native of Galicia, lush farming region in the northwest corner of Spain, Franco had begun his military career at the age of fourteen, when he entered the Spanish Infantry Academy. His progress thereafter had been little short of astounding. He early developed a passion for strategy and after three years at the Academy went to Melilla to help General Berenguer to organize the native troops. At twenty he was a captain. He then joined the Moroccan Regulars at Tetuan. Wounded in a battle, shortly after joining the Regulars, by a bullet going through his stomach and touching a lung, he recovered quickly and returned to service. He had become a commander at the age of twenty-three, and was appointed second-in-command under Colonel Millan Astray when the latter formed the Spanish Foreign Legion. Later, Astray, as General, termed Franco "one of the best strategists of this century."

Franco had been decorated with the Military Medal, one of the highest awards of the Spanish Army, for his work at the head of forces which recaptured the Melilla Zone. When Lieutenant-Colonel Valenzuela died in 1923, Franco



was given Valenzuela's rank and took his place at the head of the Foreign Legion. Continuing his whirlwind advancement, he had been named Colonel shortly thereafter. When the troops under his command had completed the occupation of the Bay of Alhucemas, leading to the reconquering and pacification of the entire Spanish Moroccan zone, Franco received his second Military medal. He was then thirty-four.

The next step in his career was one that meant much to him but was later to be one of his greatest disappointments. He was named head of the newly completed Military Academy—"Spanish West Point"—at Zaragoza. Lending his full enthusiasm and organizing ability to the new task, he made such a success of the Academy that foreign military experts called it one of the finest institutions to be found anywhere. Meanwhile, he had taken a finishing course for Colonels and Brigadier-Generals at the academy at Versailles.

When the republic was ushered in in April, 1931, there were many among the army leaders who would have lent themselves to a *coup d'état* to restore the monarchy, but Franco had been firm.

"The country must come first," he said. "The army must not think of politics."

And when the new republican regime ordered his model Academy at Zaragoza dissolved, bringing his work there to naught, Franco, although dealt a severe blow, said nothing.

He was called upon to become Chief of the General Staff and restore order when the Leftist revolt of October, 1934, threatened to engulf the new republic. He did it quickly and thoroughly, checking the movement in the principal cities before it had been fairly launched and using his fearless Legionnaires to crush the Anarcho-Com-

munist Soviet which had been set up in the rich coal basin of Asturias in the north, next to his native Galicia. The Leftists, directed by Francisco Largo Caballero, had laid their plans well. Their uprising, timed to coincide with the attempt of Separatist leader Luis Companys to set up an independent republic in Catalonia, probably would have been successful had a less capable man than Franco been at the head of the government forces. Once he had dominated the revolt, Franco had shown no vindictiveness. Only two men were executed in connection with the movement. Both were soldiers convicted of treason by courtmartial.

The killing in prison of Luis Sirval, newspaperman turned revolutionist, had been the sole blemish on the record of the army forces participating in the suppression of the revolt. Sirval was killed by a Legionaire he taunted after having been captured with a group of *dinamiteros*—dynamite-throwing Asturians who had destroyed most of Oviedo during their two-week occupancy of the Asturian capital. These *dinamiteros* were to become the symbols of the Loyalist forces in this new war which followed by twenty-one months Franco's suppression of the "Asturian Soviet" and the Catalonian Separatist "Republic."

Perhaps the fact that imprisonment was the worst that had befallen the Leftist revolutionaries of 1934, coupled with Franco's known stand against the army mixing in politics, caused him to be one of the last to be ousted in the general "house-cleaning" which followed the Leftist election victory in 1936.

I do not believe anyone knew Franco's thoughts until the day he flew from the Canary Islands to Morocco to launch the revolt. Certainly Gil Robles, his closest friend, had not been aware of them. Franco's reply when, during a banquet for several generals and Rightist leaders just

before the elections, he was sounded out on the possibility of a military *coup d'etat* in the event the Leftists should win, had gained much favorable comment.

Franco had answered, firmly: "No, it is for the people to decide."

Even during the riotous weeks which followed the elections, when the army had been assailed by Left Extremists, its dissolution demanded and its members publicly subjected to insult and attack, Franco had held his peace except to send a short note of warning to the then Prime Minister, Casares Quiroga:

"I find a good deal of bitterness at the way the army is being treated," he wrote. "I feel I must warn you of the dangers of such a state of affairs. You have been misinformed, I think, of the frame of mind of the army."

He had received no reply. The situation had become more aggravated. Soldiers were hissed and spat upon from the balconies. Two of them, one an officer, were killed on the streets of Madrid. In several other places they were stoned. Everywhere they were the butts of public ridicule.

Franco had heard, as we all had heard, rumors of a supposed Communist plot-in-the-making to seize control of the government. At first those rumors were vague. As they circulated they became more definite. The fact that the Communists made no denial lent the whisperings strength in many quarters.

Madrid was tense on May 3, the day scheduled by rumor for the movement to be launched. Other than the scattered disorders which by now had become the rule rather than the exception, nothing materialized. Then "July 29" began to be discussed across cafe tables as "the day." Typewritten sheets announcing this date as "the day for the Red Revolution's launching" had been circulated throughout Madrid and had been mailed anonymously to various Spanish em-

bassies and legations abroad. The sheets carried what was announced as a government of "commissars," presided over by Largo Caballero, which would, following the "Revolution," head the new "National Soviet." They listed the armed forces which were supposed to be available for the "Revolution," the "executive committees" which would have jurisdiction over the respective provinces "under the new Soviet regime," and urged all "comrades" to be in readiness.

Most correspondents discredited the circular because it bore no signature. José Diaz, Spanish Communist leader, denied having seen the circulars when I telephoned him about them. Whether Franco had seen fit to place credence in them and in the flood of disturbing rumors heard in the capital, only he can tell. The assassination of the Royalist Calvo Sotelo, however, was obviously what had induced Franco to cast the die without delay.

He flew to Tetuan. The Moroccan forces he had helped organize there flocked to his banner. Spanish Africa fell into his hands. After having notified the commanders of the Spanish garrisons of his movement, he dispatched Legionnaires and Regulars to the peninsula.

One hundred and sixty-one hours after I had sailed from New York I had become the first foreign correspondent to enter Loyalist Spain landwise since the frontier had been hermetically closed eight days before. It required seven hours of pleading, cajolery and brow-beating, plus the influence of several bottles of the best wine available in Port-Bou and a free-handedness with one hundred franc notes which I knew would startle my office, to "crash" the anarchist outpost on the Franco-Spanish frontier.\*

\* A chartered French plane had been shot down over Burgos and not even an offer of 10,000 francs found any takers among French commercial aviation concerns I canvassed.

In the interval the outlook had changed considerably. Cadiz, Caceres, Huelva, Sevilla, Granada and Cordoba were Franco's, as was the whole northern area of Spain from the Guadarrama mountains just north of Madrid to the Bay of Biscay, save a small strip of the Basque and Asturian coast. Huesca, Zaragoza and Teruel marked his lines on the east. He was in possession of the entire area bordering the Portuguese frontier on the west except a narrow strip in the vicinity of Badajoz.

In Madrid, Barcelona and Valencia, however, Franco's revolt had been crushed with a thoroughness that portended ill for the success of his movement. They were the three largest cities of Spain, and had been the key-points of the rebellion. Lack of coordination in Madrid, Valencia and Barcelona, was what caused the rebellion to miss fire there. The government, having, in desperation, overruled President Azana and passed out arms to the workers, seemed as though it would turn the tables on the insurgent leader.

In that first urgent need for militant manpower to offset the traditional apathy of the peace-loving masses, 40,000 common prisoners had been released on their promise to carry arms, and these, with some 25,000 recently pardoned political prisoners gambling for continued freedom, had stiffened the disorganized Loyalist forces.

But the decision of Commander Martinez Monje, chief of the Valencia garrison, to throw his support to the government, was the deciding factor in the issue at that time. For ten days Commander Monje held his troops in their barracks while he carefully weighed the odds. When the Montaña barracks fell before the militia in Madrid, and the Barcelona revolt had been crushed, Monje decided Franco's chances were slim and cast his lot with the government. Franco must have cursed the thought of Monje many times since. Valencia, key-point between Madrid and Bar-

celona with Zaragoza in Franco's hands, had no defense. Had Monje followed Franco's orders, there would have been no question about the outcome of the revolt.

Coming down from Port-Bou through Barcelona, I arrived in Valencia the day after Monje had announced his decision. Then on to Madrid in a troop-train to help chronicle, as objectively as I could, the war that was to occupy front pages for months to come. Delayed a day and night in Barcelona by the formality of securing for my *salvo conducto* four stamps from four separate and distinct "committees" working independently of each other and of the central government, I spent my time riding and walking about the city.

The revolt had been crushed in Barcelona with relative ease. There had been no shortage of weapons for the people when the government had authorized them to arm themselves against Franco's revolt. Two years before, Catalanian anarchists had laid in huge stocks of guns and munitions in preparation for their unsuccessful bid for liberty from control of the central government. These supplies had since been increased on a tremendous scale. The revolting troops had been unable to make much of a show against the galaxy of arms possessed by those loyal to the government, and the rebellion, like that of the military in the Montaña barracks in Madrid, had been quickly crushed. The majority of the soldiers not killed in action had been executed in batches after being taken prisoners.

Accompanied by a young anarchist militiaman, I visited the principal scenes of battle. Streets had been torn up to form barricades at the more important intersections. These barricades still were being manned as a precaution against any possible renewal of attack by the Rightists. I had seen the same type of barricades thrown up during the October, 1934, Leftist uprising. Luis Companys, in that memorable

October, had called upon the people of the four Catalonian provinces and established an independent republic. When the revolt failed, Companys and his cabinet went to prison. The 1936 post-election amnesty had freed him and he had been restored as head of the Catalonian government.

I made a tour of the Barcelona churches and Rightist centers which the Left extremists had pillaged and burned since my previous visit. A large number of churches and convents had been destroyed during the demonstrations following the Left election victory in February. The work of destruction had been completed during the week preceding my arrival. Only the blackened walls remained of the historic religious buildings. The statues and paintings had been destroyed or removed, the altars ripped out, the stained-glass windows broken. The burial vaults in the floors of some of the churches had been forced open and the century-old mummified bodies of nuns and priests had been removed from their mouldy resting-places. On the steps of the Carmelite church were arrayed a dozen or more of the skeletons of nuns in standing and reclining postures.

Thousands of militiamen were massing for an attack on Zaragoza, which they were confident would fall within a day or two. Other thousands were preparing to form an expeditionary force which shortly was to embark for Palma Mallorca, one of the Rebel strongholds. The excitement and general confusion were intensified by the carelessness with which many of the militia recruits handled their rifles and pistols. Several were killed and scores wounded by the accidental discharge of weapons carelessly handled. Many others were killed or wounded by militiamen with nervous trigger-fingers. It was no place for a person with defective hearing. A man walking just ahead of me on the Rambla as I returned to my hotel was shot dead when, not hearing

the command "*Alto!*," he continued walking instead of coming to an instant halt.

After dusk all traffic, pedestrian and motor, except that engaged in military operations, was barred from the streets. I saw an automobile loaded with assault-guards fired on by militiamen standing behind trees along the Rambla when the driver of the car failed to hear a shouted challenge, but none of the bullets took effect. I wanted to see something of Barcelona by night. I did not get far. Stopped by militiamen with bayoneted rifles, I satisfied them of my identity but decided to take their advice and return to the hotel. They told me it was risky roaming around the city during the midnight hours.

The red and black flag of the Anarchists was everywhere—hung from balconies, suspended from cords strung across the thoroughfares and fastened to sticks wired to the fronts of commandeered automobiles. No attempt was being made to police the city. Scowling through their week-old beards, the militia, dressed in blue overalls or simply in denim trousers and dirty shirts, with red and black neckerchiefs about their throats, were as thick as flies. Lounging here and there or speeding through the streets in their requisitioned private cars with the black snouts of submachine guns protruding over the window sills, these Catalan Anarchists looked fierce enough to startle even the directors of a Hollywood mob scene. Occasionally a shot was heard as a rifle in inexperienced hands was discharged. Loyalist seaplanes roared over Barcelona at intervals, headed for the Aragon front. Machine guns were mounted before the telephone building fronting Catalunya Plaza; the heavy plate windows of the main floor and the smaller windows above were riddled with bullet holes. Several larger holes showed where cannon had been used against the building. The Colon hotel on the other side of the plaza had been taken



over by the Anarchists. It was being used as recruiting headquarters.

I sent my first war story from a little room on the main floor of the telephone building under the watchful eye of a suspicious censor. It was the Loyalist announcement that the government was "mopping up everywhere" and that the complete domination of the revolt was "but a matter of a few days at the most."

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### CHAPTER III

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## The Insurgent March on Madrid

SHORTLY BEFORE MIDNIGHT ON AUGUST 29, I ARRIVED IN Madrid, weary after the long jolting ride on the uncomfortable wooden benches of the troop-train. My luggage was carefully searched at the Delicias station for the fifth time since I had crossed the frontier into Loyalist territory. One of the three bags I had taken with me on my ill-fated vacation trip had vanished from the Port-Bou C.N.T. headquarters while I was getting my credentials approved. It had contained old clothing and soiled laundry. Its loss made one less bag to carry, and, I recall being thankful, one less to search. The delays I had encountered seemed interminable.

Stepping out into the brilliantly lighted street, the strange calm that hung over Madrid seemed to slap me in the face. I had become accustomed to the terrific din of traffic which makes Madrid the noisiest capital in the world in normal times. The taxis had been withdrawn from the streets now. I missed their infernal honking and wheezing. Except for the chattering and laughing of groups of overalled men and women sauntering about with pistols at belt or rifles on shoulder, the occasional bumping past of one of Madrid's ancient street cars, and the muffled sound of rifle fire drifting in from the outskirts where the execution squads were at work, the silence was unbroken.

Not seeing any form of transportation, I resignedly started walking the eight blocks to my apartment, but a horse-drawn cab suddenly drew up at the curb and an acquaintance I had made on the train—a young Socialist deputy, who had come across the foot of the Pyrenees, from San Sebastian to Perpignan, and into Spain through the Port-Bou railroad tunnel—shouted an invitation for me to pile in.

When the cab clattered to a stop in front of my house the apartment porter ran out to greet me, and began excitedly relating the incidents of the past ten days. His son, a lad of fifteen, had helped in the storming of the Montaña barracks, he proudly told me. His wife and eldest daughter had gone to Avila for a visit with relatives only two days before the uprising. He had not heard from them. But they would be coming home soon, never fear. The government would have all that territory in a few days and everything would be all right; and they would all be very happy; plenty of money and a fine home. The Syndicalist committee which had appropriated our building, beating the Socialist *Comite de Incautacion* to it by a hair, had assured him that. He continued talking as I telephoned the home of Al Uhl, my colleague.

"That you?" Al exclaimed. "How did you get here? Never mind, thank God you're here. We've had a hell of a time."

I went to bed. For the first time in days I slept soundly.

Next morning I made a tour of Madrid, visiting particularly the ruins of the captured barracks and other buildings where the Rebels had made their last stand. The shot-pocked walls, blood-spattered rubble and shattered windows were the only evidences of the terrific battle waged ten days before. Downtown Madrid was in holiday mood. The crowds coursing through the streets, or seated

at the sidewalk cafes, had no forebodings. They believed that it was "all over but the shouting" and that celebrations were in order.

The militiamen, who were everywhere, laughed and slapped each other on the back and called total strangers *camarada*. They found the rôle of popular hero an enjoyable one. The town was theirs, but was not that as it should be? Had they not, with their motley collection of arms, saved the capital of Spain? Had they not suffocated the uprising in the Montaña barracks and cleaned up the whole area around Madrid including the cities of Guadalajara and Toledo? True, there were some Rebels in the Toledo Alcazar, but they were surrounded and Montaña would be repeated. What fools, the Rebels, to let themselves be trapped that way!

True also, there were many thousands of the hated Rightists still in hiding in Madrid. Search parties had already discovered many of them and would find the rest. Some of the *cacique* had taken to the sewers. When hunger forced them to come out they were shot as they crawled up through the manholes, their faces and clothing covered with slime. Why soil automobile upholstery by taking them to the outskirts?

Madrid overdid itself in paying homage to its heroes. The simple repeating of the letters "U.H.P.," initials of *Unios, Hermanos Proletarios* (Unite, Proletarian Brothers), was the magic countersign which entitled the "*Milicianos*" to free food, free drinks and free entertainment. Restaurants, cafés, bars and theaters either did not want to, or dared not attempt, collect from anyone of the thousands of over-all-clad young men and women roaming the capital in holiday mood.

There were fronts to be manned, of course, but there was yet no trench warfare. There was no semblance of

organization in the leaderless forces. The *milicianos* came and went to the various fronts as the whim struck them. They could pick the front they pleased and stay as long or as short as they pleased. Many would go out in the afternoons, as though on an excursion, and return home for dinner after firing a few shots in the general direction of the enemy. The fact that most of the young women who donned pistols and accompanied these expeditions to the fronts were volunteers from the capital's 30,000 registered professional prostitutes, coupled with the lack of sanitation facilities in the mountains and fields, resulted in a wave of venereal disease among the Loyalist forces which at that time more concerned the authorities than did the enemy. A base hospital for the treatment of these cases was set up at the foot of the Guadarramas and the standing joke of the capital was its "Permanganate Brigade."

This is no reflection on the great number of splendid types of Spanish womanhood who donned uniforms and went to the front. Carrying out the tradition of Spanish women from time immemorial, wives and sisters and sweethearts of many Loyalist militiamen took up arms with their loved ones. They did not want for courage, and on many occasions turned defeat into victory by force of their example. War-weary, demoralized men, wavering in the face of strong attack, were spurred on by brave amazons who taunted them with cowardice when they showed signs of weakening and cheered them when they fought on with fresh determination.

My own maid, a young widow whose fiancé and two brothers were fighting at the front, put on a pair of blue overalls which was the Loyalist uniform of the early stage of the war; she participated in the storming of the Montaña barracks, the capture of Guadalajara and the defense of the Alto Leon Pass north of Madrid. Like most Spanish women,

she had no knowledge of politics. She could not even read. It was sufficient for her to know that her loved ones were in danger and to want to share that danger. Spanish women are among the most loyal in the world. When the Loyalist command began to move women and girls to the rearguard, because of the difficulty of quartering them at the front and because their presence in the firing lines made discipline difficult, this young woman returned to my service. She told me that for four bitterly cold nights she had slept on the ground in the Guadarrama mountains, and that her only nourishment during this time had been a can of sardines.

Also among those who donned *monos* were a considerable number of upper-class girls—members of the hated aristocracy. Most of these volunteered their services during the first days of the war when the Loyalist rearguard was engaged in the extermination of all those of the wealthier classes it could find. By joining the militia these young women not only succeeded in saving their own lives but in many cases those of members of their families. Volunteers were given placards by the various enlistment bureaus urging militia raiding units to respect the homes of those actively helping the Loyalist cause. Few of these young society women served at the front. Most of them became office assistants for Leftist officials and were much publicized in the Loyalist press as examples of women who had “repudiated” their hateful places in the upper brackets. Later some of these girls were executed on charges of furnishing information to enemies of the cause.

Meanwhile the war went on in its haphazard fashion, without organization, without direction and without coordination. The militia were divided into various groups—Left Republicans, Anarchist, Socialist and Communist. Each group acted independently of the other. Their leaders were not military men. They were political or labor leaders or

just ordinary tradesmen who assumed military rank or were given such rank because of their popularity among the forces they led. I knew a bartender who became a captain overnight. A flamenco singer who had never handled a gun was made a first lieutenant upon enlistment.

About this time a startling truth began to dawn on the government. Franco's forces, which it had disparaged as "a few traitorous generals supported only by a handful of mislead soldiers" had been making consistent gains. The government had repeatedly declared that these "rebellious generals who want to restore a state of feudalism in Spain" would meet with the "passive if not the active resistance of every worker in the territory they held" and that the enemy would be conquered without being attacked. But this "resistance," if it existed, apparently was not holding back the enemy, who was advancing on Madrid in seven league boots.

The Loyalist militia, controlling the mountain passes to the north of Madrid, had been successful in blocking approach from that direction. In the open field they were no match for Franco's trained and disciplined soldiers from the regular army, the hard-fighting Foreign Legionnaires, and the reckless Moors whose courage and disregard for their lives in the heat of battle were traditional. Ambulance loads of wounded began to return from the front. More and more funeral processions were to be seen. At first every soldier killed was given an individual funeral with his comrades marching behind the casket. Now the victims, while still accorded the rites of honored dead, were being buried in twos and threes.

The novelty of the war having worn off for the militia, many of them stopped going to the front. Even the promise of ten pesetas daily (at that time about \$1.30, highest pay for enlisted men anywhere in the world), and rich financial

rewards after the war would be won, failed to interest a considerable number of those who had been most enthusiastic at the start. Sobered by the astonishing fact that this war was not to be a series of "Montaña incidents" crowned by quick and easy successes, and that many who went to the front never came back to relate their exploits, a number of the militiamen slipped off their gun-belts and went back to the jobs they had deserted.

The situation was not yet regarded as serious, but the continuous thinning of the Loyalist volunteer ranks worried the government. It could do nothing about it. It had no power over the powerful Syndicalist and Socialist trade unions which had appointed themselves sole overseers of everything connected with the war: administration of manpower as well as of munitions and provisions, transportation, industry, housing, handling of finances and appropriating of properties.

Catalan and Basque Separatists seized upon the rare opportunity afforded by the vital need the central government had for their support against the insurgents. They demanded their long-sought autonomy as the price of their aid. The Madrid government, having no alternative, awarded them the status of virtually independent republics. The policies of Catalonia, dominated by the Anarchists, were compatible with those of the new revolutionary, anti-clerical central regime in Madrid. The alliance of the deeply Catholic Basques with such a regime, on the contrary, created a strange paradox. Neutral observers could explain this only on the ground that the Basque separatists' desire for freedom inspired them to sidetrack the religious question in the belief that, as a completely independent republic after the war, they might be able to maintain their individuality on the religious issue.

Another thing that worried the government was the fact



that airplanes began to take a more important part in the conflict. The Loyalists had no air force. Virtually all the military and commercial pilots went over to Franco. Those who remained were suspect and were not trusted with a plane unless accompanied by a militiaman instructed to shoot to kill at the first suspicious move. Franco not only had nearly all the Spanish pilots and planes, but new Italian and German ships began to be seen more and more frequently over the lines, completely demoralizing the Loyalist militia.

As the insurgent push from the west and southwest gained for Franco more and more ground—sometimes an average of ten miles a day—foreign planes were bought and foreign pilots employed by the Madrid government. The ships were mostly warehouse left-overs. The first pilots who came into Spain to work for the government were chiefly barn-stormers with little or no war experience. The ships they were given were no match for the speedy planes of the Insurgents and they themselves were ill-fitted for the task. Of one group of nine English flyers I knew, three were killed, five were wounded and the ninth, who had had experience during the Chaco war, decided to quit before something happened to him. "Down in the Chaco we never shot at each other," he told me. "We used to go up every day and fly over the forests as a matter of routine. When we met an enemy plane we would pass it and wave and the other pilot would wave back. But to hell with this—these guys shoot at you. No matter how much money there's in it, if you are going to get killed it won't do you any good."

I had helped lift one of the wounded fliers from the cockpit of his plane which he succeeded in bringing back to Getafe airport after a "dogfight." The three holes in the back of his fleece-lined flying coat, with the blood oozing

out, and his white face as we carried him into the emergency operating room, made me agree with the Chaco lad.

The planes the government later secured from Russia and other places, however, were very good. The pilots, attracted by \$1500 a month salaries, with bonuses, were top flyers who could handle their own with anyone.

Indalecio Prieto, the Air Minister, told me:

"All this is expensive but we've got a \$700,000,000 gold reserve—the fourth largest in the world—and we'll spend it all rather than let it fall into the enemy's hands."

The government, which had changed again (September 4) to let Francisco Largo Caballero come in as Premier (I again recalled what he had told me in prison), tried to settle the manpower question without resorting to drastic mobilization which it feared would antagonize the Syndicalist, Anarchist, Socialist and Communist elements in the Front. It appealed to the loyalty of the provinces, particularly to the four Catalan provinces it had just granted autonomy. Here thousands of Anarchist militiamen were sitting on their hands waiting for the war to come to them after failing to take Huesca, Zaragoza and Teruel, eastern outposts of Franco's territory. Three thousand Catalonians did finally answer that call. They were part of the forces under Captain Bayo who had just returned from a disastrous expedition to Palma Majorca, which they had abandoned after losing many hundreds of men in their unsuccessful effort to wrest the Balearic Islands from Franco's firm grasp.

The Catalan arrivals made a most impressive sight as they marched through the streets of Madrid, their glittering equipment slung over their shoulders. The rifles they carried were brand-new, having just been unpacked from crates shipped from Mexico and labeled as "food supplies." Jauntily the Catalan militiamen paraded up Al-

calá street to the Puerto del Sol singing the *Internationale* lustily in their native dialect and interspersing it with shouts of "You are safe now Madrileños, we are here." The Madrileños, knowing that Franco's men now had reached Maqueda and were sweeping the Loyalist militiamen before them, cheered until their larynxes were sore.

The Catalonians were sent directly to the Maqueda front where they were needed most. After three hours under fire they broke their lines, and, retiring out of artillery range, sat down along the highway and declared they were through. The government, fearing that their cowardliness might demoralize the other troops, rushed them back to Madrid in trucks that same night and put them aboard a train run onto a siding behind the Delicias station so that no one would see them go. That the Catalonian temperament does not readily lend itself to soldiery has since been demonstrated time and again, especially in the Aragon sector. For more than a year now the positions of the opposing forces there have remained virtually unchanged. The Insurgents, busy on other fronts, have maintained only small retaining forces along their lines from the French frontier south through Huesca, Zaragoza and Teruel. The Catalonian militiamen, instead of taking advantage of this situation to press a vigorous offensive, have, with the exception of a few ineffectual attacks, been content, until this time, to be on the defensive.

An experienced American military observer, after visiting the Teruel front, snorted with disgust as he told of his trip:

"The militiamen are having a good time there. They are sitting in their trenches and dugouts waiting for the enemy to come to them. What chance they think they have of winning a war that way I can't possibly imagine. Why, they even have rocking chairs in their front line trenches!"

Largo Caballero began to realize the need for immediate drastic action. As president of the U.G.T., he summoned the sub-leaders of this Revolutionary Socialist group and impressed upon them the desperateness of the situation. The result was a round-table conference among the U.G.T., the heads of the Syndicalists National Confederation of Labor (C.N.T.), the Federation of Iberian Anarchists (F.A.I.), the Trotsky Communists (*Partido Obrero Unificado Marxista*—P.O.U.M.), the Stalin Communists and the Left Republicans. In the first agreement which these divergent factions had been able to reach since the beginning of the war they approved the immediate mobilization of all able-bodied men in Loyalist territory. A decree to this effect was issued. Whether they wanted to join or not, all men between the ages of 20 and 45 were pressed into military service. From this moment on, the Loyalist army ceased to be a voluntary army. The proclamations read:

"There can be no neutrals in this war. Either you are for us or against us."

The staff of foreign training officers was increased and, now in September, the first semblance of an attempt to organize a disciplined army got under way. Militiamen could not believe their eyes when they were handed circulars which said: "He who retreats is showing disloyalty to the government. There is only one way to treat those disloyal. They shall be exterminated with the same dispatch as the enemy facing us, or the traitors in our midst." But when Generalissimo Asensio, going to the Tagus front one afternoon, ordered the execution on the spot of thirty militiamen he found returning to Madrid without authorization, they discovered it was true. Asensio was relieved from active service the next day and relegated to a sub-secretaryship in the Ministry of War. In many a subse-

quent battle a rout was halted by stationing machine-guns behind the front line trenches.

The loosening of the waters of the great Alberche dam was one of the desperate but futile recourses the Loyalists resorted to in an effort to stem the Nationalist advance on Madrid. Millions of gallons of water were released when the Alberche gates were opened. The Nationalist forces, however, had not camped in the valley below the dam as the Loyalists had expected they would. They had pitched camp on higher ground. The only result of the attempt to drown them out was the killing of a number of peasants and a large quantity of stock. Hundreds of tons of dynamite were used in blasting bridges and roads, wrecking buildings which might afford the advancing enemy shelter, and ruining factories and transportation facilities in the path of the invaders. Long before the Nationalists came within artillery range of the capital, the machinery at the airplane assembly plant at Cuatro Vientos airport had been removed and the plant dynamited. Getafe airport south of Madrid was mined and blown up before the enemy had swung northward after relieving the Alcazar at Toledo.

Crowds, gathered on the banks of the Manzanares to watch drillers mining the Toledo and Segovia bridges, Madrid's approaches from the south and west, were told the bridges were being "repaired." Both these bridges were destroyed when the Nationalists finally reached Casa de Campo from the west and Carabanchel from the south. The destruction served small purpose. The Manzanares river, a shallow, narrow stream an American would properly term a "creek," never, even at flood stage, reaches a depth where it cannot be waded. Thus it was amusing to read some correspondents' dispatches, purportedly written from the scene, giving graphic accounts of "enemy

tanks sinking to the bottom of the river drowning their crews," "divers going down to salvage lost war materials," and the enemy being trapped in University City after Loyalists "destroyed rebel pontoon bridges."

Before Irun fell, the Loyalists fired the city, leaving it a smoking ruin. Anarchist militiamen placed tins of gasoline at street intersections of San Sebastian, planning to do the same with that beautiful Basque city. The authorities removed the tins and mounted guards with rifles over public buildings, instructing them to shoot to kill anyone attempting to destroy the town. In Malaga, anarchists dynamited a number of factories and public buildings, as five enemy columns swept down on the city. The sea-cocks of two vessels in Malaga harbor were opened in an attempt to blockade it. One of these was a destroyer; the other was the *Artabro*, motorship built for an Amazon expedition projected by Captain Iglesias but converted into a hospital ship during the war. Anarchists threatened to burn Madrid if the enemy should enter the city, declaring it would never fall into Franco's hands. So great was the government's fear that they would carry out their threats that the sale of gasoline in containers was prohibited. The same precautions were taken in Valencia and Barcelona. The fate that befell Irun was meted out to dozens of small towns the Loyalists were forced to abandon. When the enemy entered, it found only smoking ruins.

Every possible means of maintaining the morale of the Loyalists was employed at this time. The enemy was still advancing—more slowly than before but still advancing. Few of the Madrileños knew this. The fall of Irun and of San Sebastian were never announced. Only those having radios learned of it, and very few had radios. The government, foreseeing the demoralizing effect radio communication might produce, had rounded up most of the

receiving sets and stored them under heavy guard. Those who were permitted to keep their radios were warned not to tune in on any Rebel station under pain of being treated as a counter-revolutionary. Moreover, only the larger and more expensive outfits could get the Rebel stations anyway because the powerful government station, *Radio España*, maintained a continuous, twenty-four-hour-a-day service on the same wave-length as the strongest Rebel station at Sevilla, in order to create interference with it and other outside stations.\*

When casualties became so numerous among Madrid's forces that there was almost a constant funeral procession out Alcalá street to the cemetery, the government ended this depressing spectacle by banning public funerals altogether. The reason it ascribed was that they "interfered with traffic." When Toledo fell and the Rebel defenders of the Alcazar were rescued after more than 70 days of siege—a siege that will go down in history because of the successful resistance of an outnumbered, ill-fed group of desperate men against every element of modern warfare that could be brought against them—the news was withheld from the rest of Loyalist Spain. Just at that time it would have been a blow so demoralizing to the men at the fronts that it might have resulted in an upheaval inside Loyalist lines—an eventuality the government at that time could scarcely have experienced and survived. Only those of us who covered the fall of Toledo and those who participated in the siege knew exactly what had transpired during those seventy days.

\* See page 144.

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## CHAPTER IV

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### Siege of the Alcazar

THE MOST INTERESTING STORY OF THE MEN UNDER Colonel Moscardó who lived through the siege of the Alcazar must, of course, be told by those correspondents on the Nationalist side who went into the historic fortress after its fall, talked with the survivors and saw under what conditions the defenders and their families lived during their earthly hell. But we on the outside—watching what we all regarded as a hopeless battle against overwhelming odds—recognized and appreciated the heroism of those within.

There has been an inclination on the part of a few writers to minimize the valor of the Alcazar defenders. Some have written that many of the women who went into the fortress with the men went against their will, that they were held as possible bargaining instruments, and that the men thus hiding behind their skirts displayed "rank cowardice." Others have said that many young Toledo maidens were forced to accompany the soldiers inside the fortress and were violated by them. Extensive questioning in all quarters of Toledo during the siege failed to produce any testimony supporting these claims. The attackers, many of them residents of Toledo and former friends of those inside, told me the women were wives and relatives of the defenders who had accompanied the men rather than face capture in the city itself.



"If we had a few—just a few like that on our side, this war would end quickly," one of the artillerymen bombarding the massive old fortress told me after the Rebels had resisted more than a month.

Even mention of the word Alcazar now makes the government wince. The unsuccessful attempt to capture the fortress cost, according to the best information we could obtain, some 3,000 men and upwards of a million dollars' worth of ammunition. This material loss was slight in comparison with the blow to the prestige and morale of the Loyalist troops when the Alcazar finally was relieved. The government's efforts to prevent knowledge of the Nationalists' tremendous feat from being broadcast and from spreading demoralization through its ranks have been dealt with elsewhere in this narrative.

The first days of the siege did not excite much attention in Madrid. Toledo city had fallen easily and the 1,500 men, women and children—civil guards of the entire province and academy cadets and families of both—had withdrawn into the massive old building when the town's fall seemed imminent. It was a hopeless gesture, we thought, believing the Rebels would die like rats in a trap. Those inside were surrounded for more than fifty miles in any direction by Loyalists, anxious for their blood. They had nothing heavier in the way of arms than rifles and a few machine guns. Normal provisions in the building, which had been used as a military academy, could not last one-third the present number inside much more than a fortnight. We did not then know that the defenders had been able to increase their supplies during several foraging sorties.

The siege had lasted a month and the defenders showed no signs of surrendering. The Loyalists, exasperated at this display of stubbornness and the constant picking off

of their own men by the expert marksmen within, resolved to destroy the building with artillery. They had tried bombing it from the air but with small success. Most of the bombs had fallen within their own lines. Puzzled at their failure to starve out the Alcazarites, they dragged up their cannon and began bombarding the Rebel citadel from two sides, determined to end the siege so that the 15,000 militiamen participating in it could be released for service at the front. But they reckoned without the tremendous thickness of the fortress' medieval walls and the morale and discipline of Moscardó's men.

To keep up their morale the Alcazar defenders published a small mimeographed "newspaper" joking about their plight. They outlined lists of delicacies they intended to order when they finally would be relieved, and "played up" bits of encouraging news they picked up on their small receiving set. Copies of the papers were dropped out the windows so that the militia might see them. I prize one of these copies as a war souvenir. The sacrifice Colonel Moscardó himself had made in their behalf had made a great impression on the beleaguered men. His young son, Ricardo, had been captured by the Loyalists, and, over the telephone which was still intact, was forced to talk to his father inside the Alcazar.

"Father, they will kill me if you don't surrender," the boy cried into the phone.

"I am responsible for the lives of many hundreds here with me," Moscardó had unhesitatingly replied. "I know you will die like a brave Christian." Before he could hang up the receiver a volley rang out. The boy was dead.

Later, when a group of members of the diplomatic corps, believing Moscardó's position hopeless, urged him to surrender, guaranteeing the lives of the women and children within the Alcazar, he replied to the emissary who

had approached the walls with a white flag: "The women have decided to remain and die with their men rather than fall into the enemy's hands." The resistance of the defenders now had caught the fancy of the world. We were asked to cover the story more in detail than we had up to that time.

Al Uhl found in the stirring bit of history being made at the Alcazar something so appealing to him that he voluntarily took over a large part of its coverage. He did a splendid job. Jaime Oldfield, an enthusiastic young Englishman from our London bureau who had been sent down to help out with the war, liked the theme, too, and wrote many gripping eye-witness yarns around it.

A young officer directing the artillery fire against the Alcazar, had been very kind to us on our various trips to the batteries. Chatting over a glass of brandy in a little house near the battery position, he told us that the house, which now was used by the artillerymen, had been occupied by a family of Rightists, all of whom had been killed by the militia.

One day Uhl did not see him, and made inquiries.

"We had to shoot him" Uhl was told. "At first he set the guns against the Alcazar walls and we made direct hits. Then one day after he had set them, the shells went over the Alcazar into our ammunition factory on the other side. That could have been an error, but when the "error" happened seven successive days, we knew we had a traitor at our head and so we shot him."

I went to Toledo only seven or eight times during the siege. I saw the walls before they were bombarded and during the process of their gradual reduction to brick-dust under the daily pounding of heavy batteries placed just outside the defenders' range, despite their eight-foot thickness. I stood by the batteries as they fired and watched

their effect through glasses. Skirting around the Toledo bullring northwest of the Alcazar, I once approached so closely to the beleaguered building (behind protecting buildings, of course) that I was able to exchange shouts with the men inside—a favorite diversion of the attackers.

The last day I went down to Toledo I went with Uhl to alternate coverage on the explosion of a mine of several tons of dynamite the Loyalists had placed under the northwest tower of the great building. We had learned of the mine through a chance remark dropped by one of the sappers. The government did not want the world to know that it planned to blow the Alcazar defenders to bits. It took hours of persuasion before we succeeded in sending the story of the mine's existence. Having been tipped that the mine would be set off at six o'clock in the morning, we started at five. A puncture en route delayed us somewhat. We did not arrive until a few moments after the explosion, which had been heard for twenty miles.

The north and west walls had disappeared and the artillerymen were laying a barrage into the ruins preparatory to a charge by militiamen with hand grenades to clean out any possible survivors. They said the terrific force of the huge bed of explosive laid by the Loyalist sappers had lifted great blocks of masonry a hundred feet into the air; they said they could see, through their glasses, human bodies hurled like straws. They were convinced not one of the Moscardóites could be alive, but they were bombarding "*por si las moscas*"—just in case.

But the storming crews, which we could watch clambering over the débris, were hurled back. Deadly machine-gun fire, from the men they supposed dead, cut them down like a sickle in tall wheat. The defenders, appraised of the sapping operations by sensitive detectors, had re-

tired to the ancient fortress's deep cellars. Only a relatively few were killed by the shattering explosion of the mine. They then came up, placed their machine guns in the débris, and awaited the attack, which they easily repulsed.

One more effort was made to mine the Alcazar, but the sappers misjudged their distance and the explosion was harmless. An attempt then was made to roast the stubborn, half-starved men, whose only nourishment had been mule-meat, barley paste, and stagnant water. This too failed. Gasoline trucks were brought up, the inflammable liquid was sprayed on the walls of the building and ignited with hand grenades. But the defenders held firm.

As the Nationalist forces approached Toledo, and it became a race between their arrival and death by starvation for the Alcazar defenders, Mayor Perezaguas of the city of Toledo, a staunch Left republican and a close personal friend of mine, came to me and begged me to arrange diplomatic asylum for himself and his family.

"If Toledo falls and I am there, I will be killed for having been mayor," he said. "I have taken no part in this ghastly business, but it would be very difficult, if not impossible, to convince the enemy of that. If I leave with the others, the anarchists will kill me, because it is their custom to place the blame for their defeats on anyone except themselves."

I told him the United States embassy would not take him, because it could not violate its position of strict neutrality. He begged me to ask Secretary Wendelin anyway, believing that Ambassador Bowers, who came to know Perezaguas personally during the good-will exchanges between Toledo, Spain, and Toledo, Ohio, would make an exception in his case.

I did so and Wendelin's reply, as I had expected, was "No."

I then tried several other legations. They were filled to capacity. One offered to take the mayor but had no room for his family of eight. Perezaguas disappeared from Madrid shortly afterwards. I do not know what became of him.

Finally, just when it appeared as though the Alcazarites **MUST** give up—it didn't seem as though they possibly could hold out another day—Franco's forces arrived to save them. I have heard some observers state their belief that Franco's gallantry in delaying his march on Madrid to rescue the Alcazar defenders was one of the most serious mistakes he committed during the war. His forces had marched northeast from Talavera to Barga. To capture Toledo he had to swing his right flank southward. The three days used in the capture of Toledo for the sole purpose of rescuing the Alcazarites, these observers contend, gave the Loyalists the time they needed to throw up additional fortifications in Madrid and get their International Brigades on the way from Albacete, thereby preventing the immediate and easy capture of Madrid.

Whether this is true, or whether Franco would have paused outside the capital anyway to give his tired troops a breathing spell, and thereby permit Madrid to complete its defensive system, is something only Franco himself can tell.

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## CHAPTER V

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### Madrid's Martyrdom Begins

THE SUPPRESSION OF NEWS OF THIS GREAT DEFEAT FOR THE Loyalists was accomplished with an efficiency that surprised us. Two weeks after Toledo's fall militiamen, fighting ten kilometers north of the city as Franco moved toward Madrid, called me a liar when I, thinking they knew of it, made some reference to the city's loss.

A double line of trenches was dug around Madrid, the first twelve miles and the second some sixteen miles around the capital—one circle within another. The workmen digging them had not the faintest idea Franco had moved up to within an hour's drive of Madrid. In fact, they did not know Franco was even alive. His "death," and elaborate accounts of his "funeral" at Melilla had long before been given prominent display in the Loyalist press, and had never been denied.

The front was referred to as the "Talavera sector" when Franco's advance had left Talavera fifty miles in his rear. The "Tagus Front" was a familiar newspaper term when it was miles behind. Newsreels taken at the beginning of the war, showing militiamen occupying San Sebastian, Talavera and Toledo, were being shown in Valencia and Barcelona theatres eight months later. Since nothing indicated the age of the films, the impression given, of course, was that those cities had not fallen. "Safe conduct" passes

were cheerfully issued at the Ministry of War to points deep within Insurgent territory. If the trip was started, the bearer of the "safe conduct" was stopped well behind the Loyalist lines and turned back on some excuse calculated not to arouse his suspicions.

Fear of a general demoralization as, despite all precautions, word occasionally leaked out of the Nationalist advance on Madrid, caused the government to make furloughs from the front as few and far between as possible. Huge posters were pasted up warning militiamen: "Spies are everywhere. Don't trust anyone. Don't say a single word about anything transpiring at the front—not even to your mothers or your sweethearts." Newspapers, although carefully censored, were not allowed, as a general rule, to be read by the men at the fronts. It was not considered advisable that they should learn, even from the carefully censored accounts, of activities on other fronts. A specially edited, single-sheet newspaper, carrying only such "news" as the government believed the militia should read, was distributed among the fighters. The press carried daily accounts of fresh Loyalist "victories." When the boom of Franco's cannon finally reached the capital, indignation at the wholesale deceit was stronger than the alarm which coursed through the city. Women ran wildly through the streets, shouting:

"We have been deceived. The enemy is at our gates."

These demonstrations, like others of a similar nature, were quickly suppressed by the government. It then announced:

"We had to deceive you. The exigencies of war demanded it. But we know you will be understanding and that you will fight the good fight. *NO PASARÁN!* They shall not pass! Madrid will be the tomb of fascism. Let every house be a fortress, let every street be an impene-



trable network of barricades. It is now or never. If you prove yourself cowards your men will be killed, your wives and daughters ravished. The government is here to guide you and keep you from this fate. It will never desert you in your hour of need. Always remember that."

Less than a week later Largo Caballero's government fled to Valencia. It went at night and its departure was unannounced. Franco's forces were just outside the city. Madrid's fall looked inevitable. The nation's gold reserve, which had been stored deep in the vaults of the Bank of Spain, had been sent on ahead. The cabinet, traveling under special escort, nevertheless did not get past Tarancon on the Madrid-Valencia highway. Anarchist militiamen halted the cars.

"You cannot leave Madrid," the militiamen told the ministers. "It is for you we are fighting this war. You must stay and take your chances with the people."

The oratorical abilities of the government members were of no avail. They finally turned their cars and headed back toward Madrid. Some miles south of the capital they turned east and, making a long detour around Tarancon, struck the Valencia highway again and continued their journey. Two days later, in the face of ugly rumors, and in the expectance of an imminent entry into Madrid by Franco's forces, the newspapers were permitted to say:

"Yes, it is true the government has left. International complications which would arise should the government remain and be captured prompted it to go to Valencia where it can best look after the nation's interests. Even though Madrid should fall the war is not lost. The government in Valencia will be able to carry on until we have wiped out the last of the *canalla*."

The announcement revealed that a *junta de defensa*, or defense committee, had been constituted by the gov-

ernment before it fled Madrid. This *junta* had the same political composition as the Largo government—that is to say, the same ratio of power enjoyed by the respective parties of the Popular Front was maintained in the *junta*. The government was composed of four Anarcho-Syndicalists, four Socialist-Communists, two Communists and three Left Republicans. Full powers had been delegated the *junta*, and Madrileños were to follow its dictates “with the same respect and obedience accorded the government.”

General Sebastian Pozas was placed in charge of the military operations of the city. Inasmuch as General Pozas had once been the idolized commander of the Spanish *Guardia Civil*, most of whom now were fighting with the Insurgents, observers speculated on the possibility that to Pozas had fallen the task of securing terms for Madrid's surrender. The high regard he had been held in by the civil guards and the nature of the rôle it was thought he had been instructed to carry out, would, observers believed, save Pozas' life.

All Leftists who had taken parts in the organization of militia, confiscation of property and execution of Rightists, had followed the government in a general exodus to Valencia. With them went the *fichas* or membership archives of the Leftist unions which would enable the identification of the workers who had been left to their fate.

On the afternoon of November 9 the city gave itself up for lost. Franco's forces had pushed up from the south and in from the west. He now was facing the two main entrances to the capital across the Toledo and Segovia bridges. Censors that afternoon wore an abstracted, resigned look. They approved our copy without looking at it, saying:

“What difference does it make? It soon will be over. And what will happen to us?”

But Franco did not enter that afternoon, nor in subsequent afternoons. Why he didn't we could not then imagine. We afterwards attributed it to his extreme caution. He had but few men—which of course we did not know at the time—and he apparently was unwilling to run the risk of a defeat in the streets of Madrid after having come so far. We knew he could have entered that afternoon with only a handful of men. Why, with the espionage system he apparently had inside the capital, he did not know it, too, we never could figure out. The significant fact was he did not then attempt to enter. By the time he had decided to make the try three days later, it was too late.

Twenty-five thousand International Brigadesmen arrived from Albacete, where they had been training. Huge quantities of arms and munitions were rushed into the city. Franco succeeded in forcing his way into University City but could get no farther. Thousands of men had been working day and night in the brief interval throwing up fortifications. The completely demoralized militia had regained sufficient courage to help back up the International Brigades. Franco could get no farther into Madrid. Military men know how difficult it is to capture a large city which has been converted into a veritable fortress, unless that city can be completely surrounded and its communications cut. Franco took Malaga and Bilbao and other cities by pinching them in this fashion. Madrid was a more difficult problem.

A large city, its circumference of nearly 32 miles made a tremendous number of effectives necessary. Foreign military observers said a minimum of 150,000 men would be needed to carry out this strategy. Franco did not have nearly that number then available. He would not call on his reserves of new Spanish recruits until they had com-

pleted their period of training in Melilla. Most of his trained men were scattered along a front some 400 miles long. He probably did not have at his disposition for the November assault on Madrid more than 35,000 or 40,000 men.

The defenders had the physical advantage. Their lines of communications were reduced to minimum length now that they had their backs to the wall. Franco could have destroyed Madrid—razed it to a pile of rubble—but he did not want to do this. He did not want to destroy the city which, if he were victorious, would become his capital. Moreover, to have done so would have imperiled the lives of thousands of sympathizers he knew were waiting to welcome him as liberator. A third reason advanced by many, in explanation of Franco's obvious reluctance to convert Madrid into a city of ruins, was that most of the buildings, the elegant palaces and apartment houses that made the Spanish capital one of the most beautiful in the world, belonged to the men who were financing his campaign.

Franco could not advance into the city although he had a good foothold in University City—a vast campus of new buildings in the northwest corner of the city. This fact, as well as the Loyalists' inability to drive the Insurgents from a position which foreign military observers declared was untenable, has puzzled many not familiar with the terrain.

On the one side, the defenders', there are successive lines of strongly fortified buildings with countless barricades and barbed wire entanglements barring every street, and deep trenches and bomb-proof dugouts making direct fire ineffective. On the other side, the Insurgents', are the new, steel-reinforced university buildings having wide patches of campus with equally formidable breastworks

and deep trenches and dugouts defying attack except at cost of heavy losses to the attacking forces.

Neither side has been willing to risk those losses. The Loyalists, had they more offensive force, could have pinched off the Insurgents' communication lines crossing the Manzanares river into University City. Although they have made many tries, they had not been able, at this writing, to accomplish this objective. This same lack of offensive force on the part of the government forces has prevented them from taking Oviedo, which since the beginning of the war to this date, fifteen months later, they have had surrounded on three sides. It has likewise up to this time prevented them from capturing Huesca, Zaragoza, Teruel, Cordoba and other cities facing their lines.

This was the military situation then, that existed in the middle of November, 1936: Franco holding University City but unable to advance down the streets radiating from the center of Madrid. The situation is practically the same now (September, 1937). Loyalist mines, artillery and aerial bombardments have destroyed many of the University buildings and converted the campus into an ugly mess of overlapping craters. The Insurgents were, at this writing, still clinging stubbornly to their positions. They were waiting until General Franco could clean up the northern coast regions so that the forces he has had to maintain on the Basque and Asturian fronts might be free to do what he would have attempted in the first place had he had more men—encircle Madrid and starve it out if its defenders then refused to lay down their arms.

In the meantime the government was having a difficult time attempting to keep Madrid from revolting in protest of the desperate food situation. The situation had become more and more serious. Original supplies had been plentiful but they had been badly administered. The C.N.T.

and U.G.T. committees had undertaken the handling of all provisions and, being in bitter rivalry with one another, coordination was impossible. The militia belonging to the respective factions had a superabundance. The civil population was on the verge of starvation. By the time the government had taken over control of the provisions they were nearly exhausted. Food stocks, which Provincial Governor Carlos Rubiera had assured me were sufficient for a year's siege, had been dissipated in a few weeks.

Rationing by means of food cards was attempted in an effort to conserve and evenly distribute remaining supplies. The system was a conspicuous failure. One card was supposed to supply an entire family, but those families with relatives or friends in the food committees were able to secure as many ration cards as they desired. The result was that some families were able to lay in more supplies than they could possibly use while other families were in want.

There was no meat, milk, sugar, coffee, olive oil, eggs, potatoes, or fish. Most tinned food had disappeared early in the war, purchased by hoarders. Later, one of the measures adopted to prevent hoarding of milk and other canned goods was the compulsory opening by the storekeeper of each tin upon selling it. In order to secure a loaf of bread one had to find a place in the bread queues around midnight and wait for hours, perhaps until the following noon, for a single loaf. And sometimes after waiting for hours on end, the hungry men and women would be told that the day's supply had been sold out.

My abysmal ignorance of even the rudiments of farm life kept eggs off my menu after they became unobtainable in the stores in Madrid. With great difficulty I had succeeded in buying a chicken and had it in a cage in the *patio* of my apartment.

"If I get only three or four eggs a week, they'll help," I reflected, as I stroked my find's glossy plumage.

Next morning a loud crowing heralded the dawn. I realized I had been deceived about my "hen." A friend in the militia offered to take me to Ciempozuelos, where a friend of his was the head of a provisioning committee.

"We will get a real hen to keep your rooster company," he said, and we went.

"Are you sure this is a hen?" I asked my friend's friend, as he tied the fowl's legs together for the ride back to Madrid in our car.

"By the sacred tomb of Lenin I swear it," he laughingly assured me. "It is no longer fashionable to swear by the saints."

Why make the story longer? Next morning the crowing was in duet. I gave the fowl to Damian, the apartment janitor, who had seventeen refugees living with him in his tiny cellar cubicle, and who had not tasted meat in many days.

Most of the restaurants in Madrid were forced to close down. They had nothing to put on their menu cards. At those eating places which remained open the militia had first choice. They were given cards entitling them to free meals, but they helped by bringing in meats and vegetables secured in raids on nearby farms. The Gran Via hotel restaurant and a Basque restaurant near the Puerta del Sol catered to foreign aviators, political commissars and foreign correspondents. The government saw to it that these two restaurants had a sufficiency of the best there was, so we didn't fare so badly. The correspondents had, in addition, supplies of canned goods which they could fall back on in case of an absolute siege. I had a closet stacked high with 3,000 pesetas' worth of corned beef, sausages, flour, olive oil, rice, chick peas, sugar, cof-

fee, tea, canned milk, chocolate, crackers, various kinds of canned fruit and a liberal supply of wine and cognac. If Madrid had been cut off entirely, our office could have held out for at least a month. The Spanish members of our staff lived in the office because it was near the "neutral zone."\* We had to feed them.

What the militia left in the ordinary restaurants the general public could buy. Only the more affluent could afford to pay the prices demanded. Prices had tripled, putting what little good food there was available out of reach of the working classes. They continued subsisting on thin soups, rice, lentils, and, occasionally, oranges. It was these poor who suffered the pinch.

There was little or no fuel. The coal regions of Spain were in the hands of the Nationalists and there had been no imports. There still was electricity, generated by water power, but the government forbade the use of electrical appliances for cooking or heating. So scarce was coal that only two pounds were allotted each family per week. Kindling was unobtainable. Furniture went, then doors, window-shutters and sections of flooring. The problem of warming the scant rations of food that were available became so serious that Madrid housewives, defying the government's orders, hacked down the trees along the palm-studded Prado and Castellana, the saplings fringing the boulevards, and many of the rare arboreal specimens in beautiful Retiro park. With the splinters secured in these forages, the women would hurry back to their homes. Nursing a tiny fire on the tile floors of their kitchens rather than squander their prize in the stoves, they would bring to a semi-edible state the meager portions of rice, lentils and hard peas they had been able to secure.

Morale was at ebb. The people of Madrid dared not

\* See page 101.



protest openly. There was a dangerous undercurrent of unrest which the government feared might develop into open revolt. In an effort to bolster morale the Loyalist press pictured conditions on the Nationalists' side in the most disheartening manner possible. Nationalist soldiers who deserted to or were captured by the Loyalists were described as being in a "pitiful state," "starving and dressed in tatters." Newspaper "interviews" with these prisoners told of the "deplorable situation" prevailing among the civil populations of Nationalist-controlled areas. Epidemics of typhoid, malaria and other virulent diseases were reported to be sweeping over these areas, decimating the inhabitants. Only the application of drastic measures by the Nationalist leaders prevented wholesale desertions to Loyalist Spain, these accounts said.

This picture of privation and misery, painted by the Loyalist press, was in strange contrast to the evidence which correspondents on the Loyalist side were able to gather. The prisoners we saw were for the most part extremely healthy-looking specimens who showed no signs of lack of nourishment. Their clothing and equipment were equal or superior to that of the men fighting on our side of the war. Two American correspondents, whose sympathies for the Loyalist government make them creditable witnesses, reported, following their capture and release by the enemy, that they "had had their first square meal in weeks" when they were conducted behind Rebel lines.

One of the main fears of the Madrileños was that the Insurgents might capture the water reservoirs of Lozaya, in the Guadarrama watershed, upon which Madrid depended. Against this eventuality they scrubbed their bathtubs and filled them with water, covering the tubs with clean sheets. They were forced to discontinue this practice, however, when the government, branding it "de-



Moderate Socialist leader Julian Besteiro, photographed with the author during a chat, just prior to the war, in which he foretold "stormy days ahead" for Spain. The scene is Besteiro's study in the soft-spoken philosopher's modest little home near El Hipodromo, in the northern section of the Spanish capital.



moralizing," threatened water-hoarders with the "punishment given counter-revolutionaries." Madrileños knew only too well what that meant.

Praying for early relief, they shivered with the intense cold, their houses unheated and their stomachs crying for food. At times, aroused to desperation, women demonstrated in the streets crying: "Bread or surrender!" These demonstrations were broken up and their leaders jailed. In Barcelona a similar demonstration was fired upon. Most of the people were heartily sick of the war and wanted it over with at any price. The government had its hands full keeping down rebellion.

The use of sirens as air raid warnings had long since been abandoned. Their screaming, almost constant as the air raids became more numerous, frightened the Madrileños more than the bombs. One night just before it was decided not to sound the sirens any more, they had repeatedly sent out their shrill warning but no planes had come over. We were much mystified until Fernando Cañada, Cuban graduate of Massachusetts Tech, who had designed the huge detector used by the government forces to catch the sound of approaching planes, explained what had happened.

"The detector signalled approaching motors and the sirens were sounded," Cañada said. "But no planes came. A few minutes later it again signalled and again the sirens were sounded. Still no planes came in sight. When the signal was repeated at short intervals over a period of more than an hour, the harried siren men got me out of bed.

"I went there at once and the loud buzzing from the detector was continuing. I couldn't imagine what it was, so I dismantled the apparatus and what do you think I found? A bee! The bee had flown into the horn and had

become imprisoned at the small end. His desperate efforts to free himself produced a buzzing which sounded exactly like the whirl of an approaching plane."

One day late in October, the telephone service in Madrid suddenly was cut off. It had been working well up to that time, although of course we could use house phones only for local calls. All our long-distance conferences were made from the offices of the telephone company. When the service had been restored late that day we found out what the matter was. The Rebels had moved into towns within a radius of twelve miles of the capital. These towns had been evacuated so swiftly that the telephone lines had not been cut behind the retreating Loyalists. The Rebels, discovering they had communications with Madrid, had amused themselves by calling numbers at random and frightening the wits out of whoever answered by revealing their identity. The government, hearing of this, ordered all service cut until the hook-ups with the enemy-occupied towns could be severed.

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## CHAPTER VI

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### “Liquidation,” Revolutionary Style

DESPITE THE STEADY PROCESS OF “LIQUIDATING” WHICH THE Loyalists consider the only sure-fire method of permanently eliminating political opposition, jails and prisons were filled to overflowing. Wholesale arrests were being made daily. For a while, until the prisoners could be sorted and the execution squads handle the surplus, additional buildings, including several neighborhood theatres, were pressed into service in Madrid.

I visited one of these, a small moving-picture house on Goya Street, in which some eight-hundred men, women and children-in-arms were crowded. They had no place to lie down except in the aisles; the food given them was wretched and insufficient; the place had become foul due to limited sanitation facilities. Women with babies at their breasts sat weeping quietly. Men stood along the walls or sat stiff in the hard seats, wondering how long it would be before their jailers entered with a new list of those who were to be taken to the city's outskirts and shot. Now and then one of the prisoners would be seized with hysteria. His wild shrieks would bring an unholy chorus of cries and moans from the huddled women. It was something I don't like to remember.

Dozens of raiding parties had been assigned to search for non-sympathizers and cachés of hidden wealth. At

first they confined their activities to the night, forcing the *serenos*, traditional key-carriers, to let them into buildings they suspected might conceal money or members of the *Quinta Columna*, the name Franco had given his adherents within the capital. When the government, attempting to halt abuses, took the keys away from the *serenos* and ordered building superintendents to padlock main doors on the inside after dark, the raiders shifted their operations to the afternoon. When tenants complained that the padlock order not only failed to prevent raiding but made firetraps of their houses, the order was rescinded.

Cars labeled *CHEKA* and carrying red or red and black flags patrolled everywhere, loaded with armed men on the lookout for *Quinta Columna* suspects. Their work was simplified by the fact that Spanish law requires citizens to carry identification cards giving age, description of bearer and place of residence. These could be checked against the political credentials supplied to Leftists in good standing with their respective parties. The raiders entered cafés, some standing guard in the doorway while the rest passed from table to table demanding to see everyone's credentials. Even army officers in uniform were not exempt. Sometimes these *Cheka* agents were tipsy and their handling of their weapons made us nervous as they examined our passes. Many of them, like the guards stationed on the highways every few kilometers apart, could not read the writing on the passes. Some of them looked at the cards upside down. Those Spaniards who could not show membership in one or other of the Front Parties were dragged off and generally were heard of no more. I still remember the screams of one lad, hardly fifteen, who was taken out of a line in front of a movie house:

"Take me and kill me, but let me kiss my mother first."

They were on the lookout for clandestine radio sets,

too. Anyone having a sending outfit was arrested as a possible spy. In my apartment-house there lived an engineer who was slightly deaf. He had rigged up a set of earphones to his alarm clock so that he could awaken in the morning. The militia, ransacking the building, saw the apparatus.

“Aha! a radio broadcaster!” said one.

“No,” said the building superintendent, who had accompanied them. “The man is deaf and fixed that so he could hear his clock.”

The militiamen turned fiercely upon him. “I tell you that’s a radio, and when I say something, don’t you deny it.”

“As you please,” the superintendent replied. “You can call it a piano if you like.”

Two militiamen waited in the apartment until the engineer got home, and took him along with them. His wife was told the next day she could find her husband’s body in the morgue.

I was in a little cabaret one night with a group of friends. We were more interested in the militia which filled the place than in the fat dancer attempting a *fandanguillo*. They were laughing and drinking and exchanging jokes. Suddenly four men leaped upon the stage and, rifles in hand, pushed aside the fat dancer and shouted:

“There’s a fascist in the house! Search everyone!”

Instantly everyone was on his feet. Someone fired his pistol into the ceiling. There was pandemonium. We ducked down as flat as we could in our box as bullets whizzed from a dozen guns. Then quiet was restored and someone ordered:

“Everybody out! You will be searched at the door.”

We all passed up the narrow stairway to the street entrance where we were “gone over.”



"What caused it?" I asked, but received no answer.

Repetition of those incidents caused the nightclub entertainment to be halted. At one movie theater, the manager, after several shooting affrays inside the salon, hung up a sign: "Park your guns in the cloak room as you go in." As the Nationalist forces came nearer the city the number of killings of suspected Rightists became more numerous. The food situation was now desperate, but the penalty for complaint was well known. People suffered and were silent except when in their own homes with the doors and windows carefully closed.

Many mornings, after breakfast, Pedro Rosales, the Anarchist chauffeur the government had assigned to us with the requisitioned car we had at our service, and I, used to make the rounds of the outskirts of Madrid to check up on the *paseo*\* victims of the night before.

Singly and in clusters they lay alongside the roadway, riddled with bullets. The wooded Casa de Campo, former playground of the king, was a favorite execution spot before it came under Rebel fire. University City, called the finest university campus in Europe, never failed to produce at least ten or twelve *fiambres*—Spanish for cold meats—each day. Some of the bodies were horribly mutilated. Some were left with pieces of cardboard on their chests on which were scrawled the alleged offenses for which they had been killed. In the first days of anti-clerical outrages there were many bodies of priests and nuns among the victims. We generally could identify them by the scapulars, rosaries or bits of religious clothing jammed into their mouths by their executioners. Some of the victims were lined up against a wall in firing-squad style. Others were told to run and were shot down like rabbits

\* Spanish equivalent of the "ride" popularized by American gang killers.

as they zigzagged away. Women, leading children by the hand, sometimes went out to see the *fiambres*. And I have seen the children vomit on looking at the gruesome sights. Pedro, the chauffeur, was one of the hardest-looking individuals it has ever been my lot to know, but he had a weaker stomach than any of the children. He positively refused to come anywhere near the bodies. Pedro said his Andalusian origin made him leery about seeing dead people. The Andalusians are probably the most superstitious race in the world.

During the first weeks the death-carts did not come around to collect these bodies until nearly noon. Later they started at dawn and had them all removed by 8 o'clock in the morning. Sometimes they would miss one or two. By the time they got around next day decomposition had a good start. Workmen finding bodies some distance from the city would bury them on the spot or at least give them a shallow covering of earth as they lay on the ground.

As the death-carts lumbered toward the morgue, the feet of the stacked dead sticking out the rear like timber-butts, men and women would fall in line behind them and follow them into the death house to see if a friend or relative were among the victims. There they were allowed to look over the gruesome assembly at their leisure. Sometimes the faces had been shot away and identification would have to be made by fishing through the pockets of the putrid cadavers. This task was left strictly to the anxious ones, and many fainted and had to be taken out of the foul place. I went only once, with another newspaperman. I shall not forget the scrawny old morgue-keeper and her toothless grin as she cackled: “Business is poor, boys, only eighty today.” The dead were buried in trenches, twenty

or thirty in a pile, after twenty-four hours in the charnel-house.

It was never my experience actually to see one of these executions, but I have come upon the bodies while they were still warm. One afternoon while going to Toledo during the Alcazar siege a car swept past ours. We saw a woman inside with four militiamen. The car swept around a curve and some five minutes later we saw it ahead, parked by the roadside. Three militiamen were standing and looking at something in the ditch. They jumped into the car and it sped away as we came to the spot. We stopped and there was the woman's body, huddled against the ditch wall, with bloody bubbles flecking her mouth. Another time a young assault-guard, accused of fascist sympathies, was killed a minute before our car happened along. His hands were slowly closing when we reached the scene. I knew many of the members of the various execution squads. They used to talk freely about their work after they had finished it and come into the Miami Bar or Café de Los Cuatro Hermanos for a nightcap of cognac. The suspects were kept in several *Ateneos* and the Fine Arts building and taken out in batches each night. One of the young executioners, a lad whom I had known for several years, told me about the killing of a priest who had been suspected of conducting clandestine masses in a private home.

"We took him out with groups of others to be killed on seven successive nights," the youth told me. "We would place him last. When it came his turn we would put him back in the car and take him to the *Bellas Artes* again. Each night he thought he was to die but a quick death would have been too good for him. That *fraile* died seven deaths when we finally shot him."

Sometimes one of the victims escaped in the darkness

when he was given the order to run. These cases were not numerous. There were too many guns aimed at him in the glare of the automobile headlights. Other times one would escape by feigning death. When this trick became known, the executioners made sure of their work with a pistol shot at close range—*the coup de grâce*. Later, when there were big batches to be killed, they were taken in trucks to the nearest cemetery and there lined up, their hands tied to the hands of the ones next to them, and a machine gun turned on them. Taking them to the cemetery saved work for the death-carts and morgue-keepers. In Valencia the beach was used as an execution ground until many complaints from residents in the vicinity that the shooting disturbed their sleep caused a shift to Paterna, a village some ten kilometers northwest. A Red Cross doctor told me he had seen sixty-four suspected fascists killed one afternoon as reprisal for the assassination of one of the Anarchist leaders in a small village south of Madrid.

In addition to this process of eliminating non-sympathizers with the régime there were the “Popular Tribunals.” At first the correspondents were allowed to send news of executions authorized by the tribunals. Later the censors would permit no reference to them. I protested the deleting of a line in my copy telling of the execution of thirty condemned by one of the tribunals, and the chief censor said:

“One or two, yes, but thirty, no. Your American Babbitts would not understand.”

The accurate number of those killed behind the lines in the Spanish war will never be known. In their official reports to their respective governments the American, French and English governments were said to have agreed that 60,000 for the Madrid area, 30,000 for the Valencia

area, and 50,000 for the Barcelona area, would be "conservative estimates."

Hundreds of Spanish men and women, mainly Rightists but also many moderate Leftists who feared for their lives, sought refuge in the embassies and legations of Madrid as the wave of slaughter swept over the capital. Normal accommodations quickly were exhausted. Many of the foreign diplomats, unable to turn a deaf ear to the pleas of more and more terror-stricken residents for asylum, rented additional buildings and put them under the protection of their respective flags. This rankled the government, which sought in vain to force the diplomatic corps to turn over to it all the refugees thus protected. But the corps, particularly the representatives of South and Central American countries, refused, pointing out that Spain had for years given refuge in its embassies and legations to persecuted nationals of these countries of the western hemisphere.

The United States embassy received scores of requests for asylum but, though it pained acting *chargé d'affaires* Eric Wendelin, he followed Department of State instructions to the letter and gave refuge only to those who had American passports or who were members of the immediate families of native or naturalized Americans.

The government continued to protest that the privilege of diplomatic asylum was being abused by the representatives of several countries. Numerous demonstrations were staged in front of buildings housing refugees. When Germany and Italy severed diplomatic relations with Loyalist Spain, the severance was the signal for the invasion of these embassies by squads of militia armed with machine guns, but nearly all the refugees had been spirited away before they entered. Ultimately the Finnish legation, which housed several hundred refugees, was stormed and the

Finnish minister expelled for having allegedly conspired with the Spaniards he had protected. In one of the Central American legations, the minister of that legation told me, the chief of the military household of former King Alfonso and one of the aides of President Azana played chess together the day long to while away the time!

The only “foreigners” to be given protection at the American embassy were six blooded cows whose owner, a Cuban farmer residing near Madrid, fearing the meat-starved Loyalist militia would convert them into beefsteaks as they had all other stock in the vicinity, including many valuable fighting bulls, offered the embassy their full output of milk in return for their care and protection.

I heard, first-hand, dozens of interesting incidents involving refugees in the various legations and their benevolent protectors. Their recounting must be left for another day. Inasmuch as most of them would result in embarrassment to certain of the diplomatic corps, members who related them to me, and some might even create serious international complications, I gave my word not to put them on paper until after the war has ended.

Many killings which took place during the early weeks of the war were due to private feuds and had nothing whatsoever to do with political causes. It was sufficient simply to whisper a denouncement of an individual hated for any reason at all, and that individual’s death warrant was sealed. Many private grievances were settled in this fashion. Denouncing a creditor, for example, was a simple way of eliminating debt worries.

What the militia jokingly referred to as “trials” were held anywhere—in the back room of a café—in a private home—in a garage or vacant building. No formality was necessary to declare “court” in session. Five or six or more militiamen would compose the “tribunal.” The sessions

were as brief as the verdicts were unvarying. The "defendant," oftentimes not knowing why he had been seized, was given no opportunity to speak. Since it was not necessary for the accuser to be present, the victim never knew who had denounced him. The verdict generally was arrived at in not more than five minutes of "deliberation." Sentence was carried out promptly. The captors often kept the motor running while a defendant was taken into one of those "courts." The doomed man, quickly sentenced, was hustled off to a nearby highway. Sometimes members of the "tribunal" went along and lined up alongside the firing squads with their rifles. Then they would drift back to the "court room" and wait for a new "case." No records were kept of these "trials." The bodies of the victims were left where they fell.

A radical departure from this procedure went into effect after it was discovered that several prominent Leftists had been killed before they had had an opportunity to establish their identity. Vengeful Franco sympathizers, taking advantage of the fact that the accuser did not have to appear, had struck at their enemies with the weapon the latter had provided. Thereafter, and until the government set up the "Popular Tribunals," with appointed judges and juries, accusations had to be made *cara a cara*, with the accuser confronting the accused. If the accused succeeded in proving that he was innocent of the charges of non-sympathy with the régime and established that the accuser's motives were private, the accuser was seized and the accused was permitted to choose between taking personal vengeance on his enemy or acting as the accuser in a new "session" of "court."

The "Popular Tribunals" which succeeded those impromptu trials, while maintaining some semblance of legality, cut away judicial red tape to an astonishing degree.

If there was the slightest shred of evidence against the man or men before the bar (wherever possible, the prisoners were tried in groups), there was small hope of any variation from the verdict of the downward thumb. Those doomed by these kangaroo courts seldom see another sun rise. There have been many cases where those fortunate enough to be acquitted by a tribunal have had no better luck. As they walked out of the court room, militiamen who disagreed with the outcome of the trial were awaiting them. The momentary elation of the acquitted men was cut short by a swift ride to the outskirts, where riflemen reversed the verdict.

The day following the assassination of Calvo Sotelo, 122 of Spain's foremost lawyers had signed a protest against “lawless killings” in general, but specifically citing the Calvo incident. Later, those who had signed were ordered arrested and tried. Their protest had been interpreted as an expression of sympathy for the Rightist cause. Only sixty-nine of the 122 could be found, however. The rest had either already met death or fled the country. The sixty-nine succeeded in establishing their innocence of the charges and were acquitted. A number of them never reached their homes. Their bodies later were found at the morgue.

The depredations of “fifth column” gunmen attempting to terrorize the forces guarding the city at night was one of the problems the Loyalist authorities had to solve at this time. Certain Franco sympathizers in Madrid had begun a series of reprisals, driving swiftly through the capital at night in “phantom” cars and firing at groups of militia on guard duty. To halt this practice, countersigns were given out at ten o'clock each night to all, including newspapermen, who had authority to circulate during the night. These countersigns were changed daily. Despite this pre-



caution, the system was ineffective. The sentries had no distinguishing characteristics. They were simply militiamen with rifles. Their challenge was an "*Alto!*" shouted at your car. As you came to a stop, one militiaman would step forward and flash an electric lantern in your face, while fellow guards stood in the deeper shadows with rifles raised and ready. It was a simple matter for a group of the *Quinta Columna* to pose as sentries at some quiet spot, secure the night's countersign from the first car that passed, and then spread it through the city by "grapevine." Under the newly adopted system there was more sniping than ever.

The double countersign system was then established, and proved more effective. Sentries, as well as motorists, had to have a new countersign daily. One could not give the reply until the sentry had fulfilled his part. "Triumph is certain," the sentry would say, advancing suspiciously toward your car. You would reply: "Our lives are for the cause," and he would tell you to continue. Next night the challenge would be: "On with the revolution," and the reply: "Better dead than slaves," et cetera.

Sometimes one would forget the password or become confused with the order of the words. Then uncomfortable moments were in store. You were forced to get out of the car and were searched while your identity was being checked. It was always safer to write the countersign on a piece of paper just in case your memory slipped. Once I accompanied Julio Tomas Rementeria, chief of the Transport committee, on a night tour of the Madrid sentries. As we passed the Ritz hotel, a sentry, who had been standing under a tree, let us get almost past him before leaping into the street with his flashlight. Rementeria could not see him from the driver's seat. The car

windows closed against the intense cold, we did not hear the shouted, “*Alto!*”

I heard a rifle spitting at our rear. Turning, I saw a man in the street with rifle aimed in our direction. Seizing Rementeria’s arm, I shouted for him to stop, and we did quickly, thanks to good brakes. Militiamen came running up, and Rementeria, furious at our close call, let down the window and angrily yelled:

“Fool! Make yourself seen in time! What is the countersign?”

The sentry, flustered, stammered uncertainly, and Rementeria leaped into the street, pistol in hand. Four more riflemen came a-running. When Rementeria made his identity known, they apologized for the now thoroughly frightened sentry.

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## CHAPTER VII

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### "Liquidation," Part Two: Some Experiences

WHILE SIPPING MANZANILLA WITH A GROUP OF MADRID militiamen in Miami Bar one afternoon I was told of a "great discovery" they had made while searching the Church of the Carmen.

"Conclusive proof," they said, "of great crimes and scandals" which "had been going on in the church for years" had, they avowed, been uncovered in the "secret cellars" beneath the church. I asked for details. They offered to take me there and let me see for myself, and I accepted.

A long queue of the curious was lined in front of the church, waiting their turn to go in and see the "scandalous evidence" which those coming out loudly described. My militia escorts pushed through the line at its head and I followed them inside. Past piles of broken statuary, splintered pews and torn vestments and altar linens, we went directly to the rear of the building where a huge block of stone had been pried from the altar floor. Near the hole thus left photographers had mounted a skull on a crude framework, draped the latter with priests' vestments, and were taking some pictures.

A stone stairway led down into the dank depths below. Militia stood at the foot of the stairway with searchlights to guide the groups entering and leaving the vaults. The air

was foul and the electric torches did but small service in that long, arched chamber. We picked our way over piles of debris. As my eyes became accustomed to the poor light, I saw that the thin cement walls covering the niches of the long-buried dead had been broken through. Skeletons with grinning skulls lay in crumbling caskets or on the floor where they had been dumped while their niches were searched. The militiamen led me directly to a corner tomb and pointed:

“There you are. Come close so you can see well. This will make a good story to tell the world, if you dare.”

I peered within, and saw the partly mummified remains of a woman, the mouldy threads of what had been a burial robe covering her shoulders and feet. A partly rotted cord was looped around the waist. The center part of the robe had been pulled aside and in the hollow left by the decayed viscera there was a small skull and several bones.

“Are you convinced?” the militiamen asked me. “Is it not overwhelming proof of what went on in this church? This was a nun and her unborn babe, probably killed by some priest to cover his shame. And these other bodies hidden down here beneath the church where they thought no one would ever find them—what crimes they would relate if they could talk. It is fortunate that we discovered this secret burial ground of the priests, else the world would never have known. Will you write a story about what you have seen here?”

I took a long look and then, almost nauseated by the musty dankness of that sealed chamber, headed for the stairway. For policy’s sake I echoed the militiamen’s indignation, but I was wondering how these men and women who streamed into the tomb could be duped so easily. The skull of the supposed “unborn child” was that of a boy or girl at least five or six years old. As far as the other bodies

were concerned, any Madrid guide-book lists the Church of the Carmen as one of the first official burial-places of the capital.

"A glass of cognac? Yes, you can get all you want—there at the church."

We could scarcely believe our ears when a villager thus directed us in Silla, a small town south of Valencia. But it was true.

The parochial church, one of the few in Loyalist territory to escape the firebrand, had felt the new era. Villagers had interfered when Anarchists attempted to destroy the beautiful old stone edifice, persuading them it could be put to practical use. Dominating the town with its tall Gothic tower, the church has been converted into a combination town-hall, bar and café. The altars had been ripped out and the religious paintings torn down. In the latter's stead are huge Marxian watercolors, painted on the walls by village artists with more enthusiasm than talent. The speaker's platform occupies the place where the main altar once stood. The niches left vacant by the removal of the side-altars have been made into stall-like offices for various Anarchist and Marxist committees. Across one side extends a bar, and there are tables and chairs where the pews formerly stood. The vestuary has been converted into a public comfort-station with modern porcelain equipment.

An old Anarchist with the inevitable red-and-black kerchief and double-barreled shotgun loaded with home-cast "grape" was on guard duty "just in case there was any trouble." Having eagerly accepted my invitation to a glass of cognac, he told me that the three priests who had lived in the parish house to the right of the church, and twelve nuns who had lived in a convent school on the left, "had been sent away."

“Sent away?” I asked, without evincing too much interest.

He laughed and patted his gun affectionately.

“We gave them tickets,” he said. “But one-way tickets, not round-trip. I can assure you, my generous friend, they won’t be back.”

One of the experiences I had in Madrid during the first months of the war was typical of those hectic days when murder was king in the capital. It concerns a strange dinner party given by a young physician and surgeon whose name can now be revealed because he recently succeeded in escaping from Loyalist Spain.

Doctor Eduardo Martinez Alonso, possibly because of his Oxford education, had succeeded in building up a large clientele among the residents of the American and English colony in Madrid. Because he had once been physician to the royal family and because his own family was fairly well-to-do, Doctor Martinez realized that the war made his position extremely dangerous. He had been able, through bribery and the assistance of a former patient who was an influential member of the Communist party, to secure approval of his application for Red Cross work in one of the “radios,” as the various Communist groups were known. This acceptance entitled him to the protection of a Communist *salvo conducto* and a document which, fastened to his apartment door, was calculated to ward off any of the raiding parties combing Madrid. It vouched for his “complete allegiance” to the government. Doctor Martinez was particularly anxious that his premises be not examined for reasons I was one of the few to know quite well. His visitors were few and very carefully selected. Yet, out of sheer necessity, in order not to attract suspicion by isolating himself during these days when everyone called every-

one else "comrade" and hospitality was extended to militiamen in open-house style, he occasionally invited one or two of them to dinner.

This particular night there were two denim-clad Anarchists at the table with the doctor and myself. They were ferocious types, with huge pistols swung from their leather belts. Several glasses of potent Valdepenas wine, served before the soup, inspired the two to recount their respective adventures in reducing the number of hated enemies-within-the-ranks.

One, it developed, had formed part of a firing squad which had killed 37 in one night. He boasted of his aim in bringing down a man, who, escaping the first volley, seemed fair on his way to escape among the trees in the wooded Casa de Campo, the main execution ground behind the presidential palace.

The other sipped thoughtfully during his friend's elaboration of the details of that night in the king's former playground. When the story had ended with another reach for the decanter, Number Two began with a graphic picture of how he had penetrated the disguise of two priests grimy in the garb of coal carriers.

"They had Socialist carnets and looked like true *car-boneros*," he said. "The rest of the comrades with me were for letting them pass as they pushed their way down the highway toward Toledo. But I was suspicious and, jerking open the dirty shirt of the older one, there sure enough, was a scapular. The other one then tried to run but we grabbed him and, opening his blouse, found another medalla.

"The two *canalla*, admitting they were *curas*, then got down on their knees and began to pray us to spare their lives. But we took them to the side of the road and handed them shovels.

“‘We dig no graves for caciques,’ I told them. ‘Get busy!’

“They were so nervous they couldn’t dig very fast in the hard ground, so after they had gone down a couple of feet and we got tired watching them, we gave them the *paseito*. But of course we had a little fun with them first.”

This “fun,” it seemed, had consisted in emasculating the priests and then, after shooting them down, forcing the severed organs into the dying victims’ mouths.

Number One banged the table with his glass and called for more wine.

“Good enough!” he cried, watching the glass fill. “That’s what they all ought to get, the fat pigs. And the nuns, too, the dirty *putas*. Sleep with the priests and live off the fat of the land. Then go around with their hands outstretched begging alms from the poor. Most of the *frailes* and *monjas* have been given the *paseo* but there still are some in hiding. We’ve got to find them all and put them where they’ll do no more begging to fill their safety-deposit boxes. All of them, let not one escape. You agree with me, eh, *amigo doctor?*”

“You are quite right, *camarada*. All of them,” the doctor said quietly, and looked at me.

What would this pair have done had they known that the two “maids” who served them their wine and meat were nuns, and that in the room just beyond the mirrored doors to their right sat a priest nervously listening to their every word? The nuns, sisters of the cook, had taken refuge in the doctor’s house. The priest was a lifetime friend of the young medico’s father whose plea for protection Doctor Martinez had not had the heart to refuse.

After he had succeeded in bribing his way out of Loyalist Spain I received a letter from Doctor Martinez. He told me that although he had been commended for per-



forming more than three thousand successful operations on Loyalist wounded he finally had had to flee in fear of his life. He had become a marked man, he said, when Anarchists learned that he had administered to a young Rightist suspect who had escaped a militia firing squad with but a slight wound. He said that before he left Madrid he had found refuge in one of the legations for the three religious he had sheltered in his home.

During the first months of the war prisoners were shot immediately upon capture.

"We cannot spare the extra food, nor the men to guard prisoners," the militia told me.

A Red Cross nurse told me a young infantryman had been brought in wounded, the stretcher-bearers thinking he was a Loyalist. When the error was discovered in the base hospital, the militia attempted to kill the wounded man as he lay helpless on his cot, but Red Cross nurses intervened. A guard was then posted over the wounded man. When he had been cured sufficiently to leave the hospital, he was shot as he reached the *patio*.

When the government decided to convert the prison at Ocana into a huge base hospital, they asked the Red Cross how many beds could be placed there.

"If you can find other quarters for the 189 prisoners held there we can put in about 500 beds," a Red Cross official said. The prisoners had been rounded up in surrounding villages as Rightist suspects.

"Tomorrow the prison will be empty," he was told. It was. The 189 were taken out that same night. Lined against a cemetery wall, they were mowed down with machine-guns.

José Antonio Primo de Rivera, son of the former dictator and organizer of the Spanish Nationalist Syndicalist Party, was one of those executed in the general "liquidation" of

Rightist leaders at the outset of the war. Independence of thought and action had characterized Primo's brilliant political career. He declined to ally himself with the Gil Robles coalition in the 1936 elections although he knew that his refusal virtually assured defeat for the National Syndicalists. Primo bitterly resented the fact that this party frequently was referred to as “fascist.” The National Syndicalists supported the Catholic Church but apart from the religious issue their policies were almost identical with those of the C.N.T.

The 33-year-old political leader, although of slight physical build, had gained a reputation as a fighter during his one term as deputy to the Cortes. When heckled during his impassioned pleas for social reform or when some slurring remark on the memory of his dead father was passed by a critic of the Rivera administration, young Primo had often scrambled over the benches of the chamber and engaged in hand-to-hand affairs with fellow deputies. Soon after the February elections Primo was imprisoned for his caustic criticism of the new régime. In public speeches and editorials in his weekly newspaper Primo declared that the “failure of the government to prevent destruction of Rightist property or to punish those responsible for the destruction demonstrated the impotency of the new Popular Front government to govern.”

Inasmuch as many of his attacks had been leveled directly at the Anarchists, he was one of the first to be marked for death by the C.N.T.-F.A.I. following the outbreak of the war.

The government, realizing that Primo enjoyed considerable popularity in many quarters abroad, made an effort to save his life. Largo Caballero took a particular interest in the case because word had been sent him that his young son, whose name I never secured, was being held as a

hostage by the Rebels and that Primo's death would mean the boy's death. Primo was spirited incognito to Alicante after the government had caused reports to be circulated that he had died in prison, but the ruse failed. The Anarchists traced Primo to his secret dungeon cell in the Alicante prison and threatened to storm the prison unless he was delivered to them. They finally agreed to the pleas of the Governor of Alicante that Primo be given trial. He was tried. The trial was such a farce that correspondents were not permitted to attend the sessions or to cable anything of the proceedings after the first day.

Primo was executed November 20, 1936, by a militia firing squad. The government did everything possible to prevent news of the execution from reaching abroad but it leaked out through Gibraltar several days later and we were permitted to confirm it. Largo went into mourning. We supposed he had heard his boy had been shot.

Had it not been for the fact that the militia had destroyed all official records, one of my visits to young Primo de Rivera while he was in prison might have caused me severe embarrassment. All archives were destroyed, particularly prison records, to prevent them from ever being used against the liberated common prisoners, and municipal records of title, deeds and mortgages, to efface all proofs of ownership of properties confiscated by the government.

I was a trifle uneasy for some time after Primo's execution until I was certain that all the records of the Madrid Model Jail had been destroyed. The government agents, in their search for possible "disaffecteds," were rounding up everyone they could find who had been known to have visited any of the Rightist prisoners prior to the war.

I had wanted to interview Primo, then a prisoner in the Carcel Modelo, but discovered he was being held virtually

incomunicado. I called his brother, Miguel, who was acting as his attorney and asked him how it might be arranged.

Miguel said: “Meet me at Chicote’s bar in an hour and I’ll take you there.”

I asked him how he would fix it. He told me not to worry, that I’d see José. This was just before Calvo Sotelo was killed. Feeling was running quite high against the Riveras and other prominent Rightists. I was not made more comfortable by Miguel’s calm assertion, as we drove out to the Montcloa district in his car, that two attempts had been made to assassinate him during the previous forty-eight hours.

“Each time I take my automobile out I wonder if I am going to return,” he said, then added jokingly, “it would be funny if some one would shoot at me now and hit you instead. Of course, if they aimed straight you’d have a good scoop.”

I stood by the inside gate of the jail while Miguel did the arranging in the warden’s office a short distance away. On his instructions I kept silent when the warden came out and looked me over. So closely did he scrutinize me that I thought he was going to turn me away. Finally he nodded his head and the massive inside doors were opened.

The jailers left me alone with José for nearly an hour. We had a long and interesting chat. He told me that he had broken off his friendship with Gil Robles because of the latter’s “high-handed” treatment of him during the February elections, and that he was only waiting to get out to “even the score.” Little did he realize then that he never again was to breathe free air, and that within six months he would be dead. It was Primo’s last interview.

When I came out of the prison Miguel was waiting for me. I asked him:

“How did you fix up things so splendidly for me? You must have done some fancy wire-pulling.”

"It was easy," Miguel replied casually. "I just put you down as a cousin by marriage."

While I stared at him blankly, he continued serenely:

"The car's this way—I'll drop you off at your office."

"No, thanks," I muttered, and took a taxi.

Miguel was arrested shortly after that and was sentenced to thirty years. I later heard that he had been kidnapped from prison and executed but could not confirm this.

The wholesale execution, in this same jail I had so often visited, of more than one hundred political prisoners including many outstanding figures of the new republic, was one of the war's early highlights.

On the afternoon of August 22, 1936, certain of the political prisoners who had despaired of their fate after watching successive groups singled out for execution each night, fired the northeast wing of the prison in a desperate bid for freedom. They were captured and shot before they had gained the street. The fire was extinguished.

Instead of punishing only those who had participated in the attempted delivery, the enraged militiamen turned their machine guns on the hundreds of prisoners herded like cattle below them. Those who were not killed or wounded flung themselves on their faces begging for mercy. When the machine gunners finally ceased firing, more than one hundred had been killed and about that many wounded. Militiamen then went to the cells where were confined José Martinez de Velasco, Agrarian leader, and Melquiades Alvarez, chief of the Liberal Democrat party. Dragging them into the corridor, they accused the pair of having fomented the attempted jail-break. Alvarez and Velasco protested their innocence but to no avail. With others, including Gabriel Ariztizabal, former mayor of Madrid, and Rico Avello, former Minister of Interior and High Com-

missioner of Morocco, they were executed in one of the smaller *patios*.

Several high officers of the military who were being held pending trial also met death at the hands of their jailers this day. Among these were General Eduardo Lopez Ochoa, leader of the forces which suppressed the Asturian revolt of October, 1934; General José Giraldo, former commander of the Madrid Hussars; and Lieutenant General Leopoldo Saro, former chief of staff. Captain Julio Ruiz de Alba, observer on the transatlantic flight of General Franco's brother, Ramon Franco, in 1929, and co-organizer of the National Syndicalists in 1933; Juan Ignacio Fanjul, son of General Fanjul who had been executed for heading the uprising in the Montaña barracks in Madrid; and Lieutenant Fernando Primo de Rivera, youngest son of the former dictator, were others “liquidated” in the prison clean-up.

One of the most unfortunate incidents during the war was the murder of the three sisters of the Uruguayan consul in Madrid. It caused the severance of diplomatic relations between Uruguay and Spain. The three girls, ranging from eighteen to twenty-three years, had been brought to Spain when they were very young and had received their education in convent schools. They were suspected of maintaining liaison with one of their former teachers now in hiding. One Friday they disappeared after telling their family they were going for a short walk. Their bodies were found next morning along the highway east of Madrid. Their brother told me the girls had been attacked before or after they were killed. The censorship prevented us from sending confirmation of the deaths when our office advised us of the break in diplomatic relations and asked us to confirm the story of the triple murder.

The murder of Baron Borchgrave, *chargé d'affaires* of

the Belgian embassy and friend of many of the American correspondents, was another of the unfortunate incidents of the war. Married to an American girl, the young Baron spoke English, French, German and Spanish fluently, and was an excellent bridge player. Intensely interested in the progress of the war, he used to visit the fronts around Madrid almost daily. Often he would come into our office for a smoke and a chat. Occasionally one of the correspondents would go with him on one of his visits to the firing lines.

One day the Baron disappeared shortly after starting out alone on such an excursion. When he failed to come home that night, his attractive wife became frantic with worry, called all the newspapermen she could locate, and a search was started. A week later his body, riddled with bullets, was located in a trench in which some fifteen other *paseo* victims had been dumped. Investigation showed that he had been seized by Anarchists as a suspected spy and forthwith dispatched. The Belgian government vigorously protested the slaying and demanded 1,000,000 gold francs indemnization, threatening to sever diplomatic relations unless the demand was met. We understood that the Valencia government paid the sum demanded. The unhappy widow, grief-stricken at her husband's death, was still in Madrid when I left Spain.

Members of an execution squad told me how a young Rightist suspect, held at the Bellas Artes improvised prison, had perpetrated a trick by which he had avenged himself even in death. Taken out of his cell by four militia one night, he seemed to realize he was to be killed. As he was placed in the back seat of an automobile with a militiaman on each side, he said quietly:

“You are taking me for a *paseo*, but you will die with me.”

The two in the front seat turned and laughed in his face, and the men beside him joined them.

“How, *canalla*, do you propose to kill us?” they jeered. “You have no weapons.”

“You will see,” the doomed man rejoined, and then was silent as the car headed for the outskirts of Madrid.

Twice the car was stopped by the groups of militia guarding the highway, and when the militia identified themselves, was permitted to continue. Now they were nearing the execution-place. The doomed man saw a little distance ahead the lanterns of another group of guards. As the car slowed down and the driver leaned out to give the password, the prisoner suddenly shouted in a ringing voice:

“Viva Franco, Arriba España!”

Instantly the ready rifles of the guardsmen spoke and three of the Loyalists in the car were killed with their prisoner before their lips could frame a protest.

Membership lists of religious societies falling into the militia’s hands were vigorously checked by the house-to-house squads seeking members of the so-called “Fifth Column” of hidden Franco supporters.

Three persons who lived in the same block as I did during my short stay in Valencia, were arrested and subsequently “disappeared,” because their names were found on the list of a scapular society whose members paid a monthly fee of one peseta. (Then about thirteen cents, American money.)

Forty-seven young seminarians of Guadalajara were brought into Madrid in trucks and placed under guard in a greenhouse at the rear of the Marques del Duero palace, just across the Castellana from the Ministry of War.



I asked one of the guards:

"What is going to happen to these boys—are they not too young to be able to do your cause any real harm?"

The guard answered:

"Their youth will not help them. We must stamp out the seed."

The next day I passed by the greenhouse, and it was empty. I looked for the guard I had spoken to the day before but could not find him. I had Pedro the chauffeur make a casual inquiry.

When Pedro came back he said, chuckling at the pun:

"The 'seed' that guard referred to has no more need of a greenhouse. The boys were given the *paseito* last night."

On the Peguerinos front northwest of the Escorial I watched the cremation of eighty Moors killed or wounded during an attack the day before. Gasoline was poured on the bodies of the dark-skinned men as they lay in the shell-pitted field, and a torch made of rolled-up newspaper was applied. Some of the men, not yet dead when the fire blazed, attempted to drag themselves along the ground. But their long white robes had been drenched with the fuel and soon they, with the silent dead, were converted into ugly black heaps. A shifting breeze brought the stench of the burning cadavers back toward us as we stood some fifty yards away, nauseating us and completely ruining our appetites for lunch.

One of the officers told me the Moors had come over the brow of a hill with hands raised, calling "Camarada! U.H.P.!" The militia, thinking they were deserting their own lines, withheld their fire. As the Moors reached the machine-gun emplacements they suddenly brought their upraised hands down in quick forward swings, hurling hand grenades at the emplacements. They then turned and

raced back, but they were not able to reach the protection of the rise.

I have always wanted to think that those who carried out the cremation believed all the Moors were dead. But when I recall the stories told me by Red Cross doctors and nurses of wounded Moors being killed as they left a hospital, I sometimes wonder.

I was conducted by devious routes to a room in a town I shall not name. The man most hated and hunted by Loyalists arose to greet me. It was Diego Hidalgo, the Minister of War who dictated the orders which smothered the October, 1934, Leftist uprising.

All others involved in the suppression of the 1934 rebellion and trapped in government territory by the present war had felt the vengeance of the men whose hatred they earned. But Diego Hidalgo, the prize most sought, still was at large when I left Spain. For eight months he had trembled with fear at each approaching footstep. The government's ace ferreters were on his trail, but thus far he had eluded them. Perhaps they have found him by this time. I do not know. They had come close several times, but not quite close enough. Diego Hidalgo was confident that, the trust of the few who could betray him maintained, he would not be caught. But the nerve-wracking suspense, the terrific strain of these months of hiding, had produced their effect.

“My life has been hanging by a thread since the war broke out,” Diego Hidalgo told me, when I had finally been led to him after much traveling and cross-traveling to throw possible shadows off the scent.

“You remember how I looked when you used to come to see me in the Ministry of War thirty months ago, and you see me now, an aged and broken man. It is a fearful thing to be hunted like an animal, never knowing when

your moment may come. Each day seems an eternity, each night an interminable horror. I never know when they may come, when I will be dragged out of this place. Twice they had their hands on me as I made my way here, but they did not recognize me. If they had. . . .”

Stooped and sallow, his deeply-lined cheeks heavy with scraggly, greying beard, his wasted frame garbed in ill-fitting and tattered clothing, the Diego Hidalgo who sat facing me bore slight resemblance to the tall, alert figure I had known two and one-half years before.

“I know how a hunted criminal must feel,” Diego Hidalgo told me, endeavoring a wan smile. “But I am not a criminal. I only fulfilled my duty as minister of war when I ordered the army out against the extremist revolters. Since when has conscientious discharge of duty become a crime? If it were all to do over again I would not hesitate in doing just as I did, even knowing this would be in store for me.”

He told me that among those now in the government he had many close friends who would, if he appealed to them, do everything they could for him.

“But this government is a prisoner of the Extremists—it cannot guarantee safety for anyone,” he said. “I would be given a passport, but the Anarchists guarding the docks at Valencia would pay no attention to it. I would be killed like a dog, and life is sweet.

“I am not Rightist, I am not Fascist. I am a Republican,” he declared. “I contributed my entire fortune to the republican movement during the latter years of Alfonso’s reign because I believed a liberal-democratic form of government would bring a new Spain. It is sad if the issues now are Communism or Fascism.”

I often thought of Diego Hidalgo after I had left him

in his hideout, and wondered if he still were there. Months later when I was leaving Spain on a British warship I thought of him again. What he would not have given to be on that same boat. Diego and thousands more, hidden in secret places, waiting for they know not what.

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## CHAPTER VIII

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# Life in Madrid During the Siege

EVERYWHERE I WAS ASKED: "HOW LONG WILL THIS LAST? We cannot stand it much longer." But they did stand it and, as this was being written, were still standing it, though God only knows how.

When the Insurgent forces spread eastward from Toledo and took Sesena, the only rail communications the capital had with its food source, Valencia, were cut and the sole means of transportation since then has been by truck. It is hard to feed a refugee-swelled city of more than a million people in this way. The government, which before had prohibited anyone leaving the capital, now sought to evacuate the women and children. A few thousands, chiefly those who had come to Madrid as refugees from the provinces, went. The rest refused. They believed it would be only a short time longer they would have to suffer this way, and refused to abandon their homes. The real martyrdom of Madrid, however, had not yet begun. Succeeding months were to be ones of untold horror for these people, more than half of whom were not interested in the war and did not care who won it as long as they could have some surcease from the privations being forced upon them.

Before the Nationalist bombing planes came over the city, General Franco announced that he would respect a zone which he outlined, roughly a mile square, and asked

that all women and children be sent to that part of the capital. The government's reply was that it would not recognize this zone, but almost immediately it transferred most of its barracks and munitions to points within it. Although Franco must have known this, he did not send a single shell or bomb into the "neutral zone" until months afterward.

The Extremist centers of *Puente de Vallecas* on the southeast side of Madrid and *Cuatro Caminos* on the northwest, would, observers knew, be the first points of attack, but the civil populations of these two danger zones were not permitted to leave until after many of their buildings had been demolished and dozens of persons killed by aerial bombs and artillery shells.

Franco, in his efforts to capture the now-fortified city, first showered it with leaflets urging peaceful surrender and guaranteeing that the lives of all except those found guilty of cold-blooded murder would be spared. Militiamen with rifles stood at the street intersections. Anyone making the slightest motion toward one of the leaflets was shot on the spot. At the end of the paper "bombardments" the militia would sweep up the leaflets and burn them.

The first bombs that were loosed on the city were small ones, as were the first shells. As the siege lengthened, they increased in size. The people were terrified, but could do nothing. The government, now safely in Valencia, knew what the loss of Madrid would mean to its prestige and sent its heaviest guns, its best tanks, and the pick of its International Brigades to defend the city.

The recognition of the Burgos government by Italy and Germany upon Franco's gaining a foothold in the capital was a severe blow to the morale of the already greatly demoralized people of Madrid and Loyalist Spain, but

cinema "trailers" and impassioned speakers with sound trucks sought to reassure them.

"Russia is on our side. Russia is more powerful than all our enemies together. Have heart, and Russia will save us."

The ensuing weeks and months were to be terrible ones for Madrid. The days I spent there during the early part of that nightmare siege come back to me at night to make my dreams horrible. Pictures of the suffering and terror and destruction I witnessed float before me when I try to work. I had been accustomed to seeing death, but this was worse than death. The mental torture, the nervous strain that one went through, knowing that any second might be his last.

Screaming sirens . . . people huddled in subway shafts and damp cellars . . . that horrible suspense as the planes roar over . . . the crashing of bombs . . . red flares of burning houses . . . chatter of machine guns and rifle fire . . . bursting grenades . . . roar of dynamite mines . . . Death everywhere. Death and destruction. A conglomeration of all the carnage and havoc one has ever seen or can imagine. A nightmare of slaughter and living horror. A seething hell which makes Dante's masterpiece a tame thing by comparison. Modern warfare.

The newspaperman who comes back from that hellish chaos which is the Spanish civil war feels its searing effect etched so deeply on his soul it never can be effaced. His mind, his heart, his whole conscious being are numbed by the ghastliness, the barbarity, the inconceivable things that he has seen in this horror-drama of brother against brother, father against son.

Those newspapermen I have since seen and talked with have, without exception, suffered the same nervous reaction I have felt since leaving Spain. It might aptly be termed "bomb jitters." Planes above. Where will the bombs fall?

No use going downstairs. Those terrible messengers of destruction crash through a six-story house as though it were made of paper. Sometimes the cellar is the most dangerous place. Find a corner next to some thick, outside wall and pray. Crash! Your house shakes. The windows rattle like drums. Some of them shatter and the glass falls inside. A bit of luck that time! It landed several doors away. Not your time yet. Just like the lottery, the Spaniards say. If one's got your number on it, no use trying to get away from it. It'll find you.

Take the shells, too. You cringe when you hear one scream overhead like a rushing express train, but that's foolish. The ones you hear never hurt you. The one that has your tag on it you'll never hear. If it's coming at you it beats its own sound. Someone else will hear it but not you.

The planes have passed. Or have they? You go to bed, but you don't sleep. A noisy exhaust on a passing car becomes a bombing plane. A slammed door and you jump. The snorting of a one-lung messenger cycle ripping past is machine-gun fire. The hum of the rising elevator in the hall is a pursuit plane circling.

You light the lamp and reach for a cigarette. No use trying to sleep. Put on your slippers and go out in the hall. Frightened men and women huddle on the stairs, afraid to go up yet. They whisper among themselves as though afraid their voices might bring back the planes. You offer one of the men a drink and he accepts with alacrity. Liquor is scarce, especially cognac. Franco holds the cognac area.

"May I bring my wife in for just a little drop, *señor*?"

The woman whimpers as she sips. "How long will this last?" she sobs and your heart goes out to her.

In the daytime it is almost as bad. You hear the planes and rush to the window or out in the street. You feel better out in the street. When you are outdoors you can



see whether they are overhead or not. That is one advantage over the artillery. You never know when a shell is coming in your direction, but unless the planes are right over you, you are pretty safe. Of course there are the machine-guns on the planes, and the anti-aircraft on the ground. Once in a while a spent anti-aircraft one-pounder which didn't explode comes down and kills someone.

And each time those black planes carrying death beneath their wings come over, you remember the effects of raids you have seen.

Torn bodies of men, women, children. Some inert in mid-street, some writhing and moaning pitifully. Cadavers of donkeys which a moment before the bomb fell were placidly pulling their little carts. Bodies of mothers with babies in their arms. Mangled forms, crushed beneath the debris of wrecked houses. Legless, armless torsos flung into the gutter and streaming blood. A hand here—where does it belong? There a foot, a woman's. Your trips to the morgue where the bodies of the victims are piled afterwards, and the cries and shrieks of relatives as they identify their dear ones. Hell, that calls for a drink. But a drink won't help you.

The bomb jitters, they're hard to shake off. Long after I was out of it I was still to feel them and catch myself trembling when a mail plane went over, or I heard a door slam hard. You unconsciously cast frequent nervous glances at the sky. Your friends, not understanding, laugh at you, and you feel a little sheepish. But you cannot help it if you have been in Madrid.

And yet, the people of Madrid became used to it. One gets used to anything if it continues long enough. Lovers stroll the streets seemingly oblivious to the shattering crescendo of artillery fire. Women stoically wait hours in line for a bit of bread or a spoonful of oil. They stay there,

fearing to lose their place, even during the heaviest aerial bombardments. Some camp in the subways, sleeping on the cold concrete platforms or on the stairs. Others, particularly the aged unable to climb up and down the stairways several times a day, stay in the cellars. During my time in Madrid we had as many as twenty raids in a single day, but the fast new Loyalist pursuit planes later maintained almost a constant patrol over the city and the raids became fewer.

The night of one of the fiercest of attacks, when the whole western sky was a sheet of flame punctuated by the roar of artillery and explosions of hand grenades and the crash of thousands of rifles, a hand plucked my sleeve as I groped my way along the Castellana toward the embassy. A young girl was standing there, beneath the palm trees.

"*Me quiere acompañar?*" she asked me. Would I like to accompany her?

I was astounded. "Are you not afraid?" I asked her. "Are you not afraid to be out a night like this?"

She released my sleeve and turned away.

"One must eat even if one is afraid," she said.

That simple statement, in my mind, sums up the whole attitude of the *Madriileños* in their fearful martyrdom. Simply a case of hunger having conquered fear.

Thrills? The correspondents had plenty of them. They finally became so frequent they were almost commonplace. Many of the others "covering" the war had more numerous and more exciting experiences than I, but those I had will last me at least for a while. Never a moment that we did not wonder whether that one was to be our last. For death dropped out of the heavens by day and by night. The morgues were choked with the bodies of young and old.

It was, and still is, at this writing, an extremely hazardous adventure just to go into the center of town—and we

had to go to the telephone company in the very heart of the business district every day and sometimes two and three times a day to phone our stories through to London. Telegraph was uncertain and at its best hopelessly slow. The telephone service, while anything but good during this war stress, was fairly dependable and had to be relied on almost entirely.

We had to wait as long as ten to twelve hours when the service through the single open line through Valencia and Barcelona to Paris and London was poor either because of excess of traffic or because something had happened to the line, under fire in several sectors. Generally, with luck, our calls were completed in from two to four hours. It was during these waits, after the telephone building finally came under fire, that we had some of our most nerve-wracking moments.

During the first weeks of the siege of Madrid the telephone building was completely immune from attack. In it we had safe, comfortable "ringside" seats at the daily bombings and shelling of the rest of the city. Enemy planes came so close we could see the pilots and machine gunners' facial expressions as they went about their work of destruction. Again and again the Loyalist fortifications from Toledo bridge on the south to Segovia bridge on the west, expected attack points, were bombed with heavy explosive. Huge clouds of débris-filled black smoke rose in the wake of the great black bombers.

Shells fell all around our vantage point on the thirteenth floor on this tallest building in Madrid—it had fourteen including the tower—but none hit our observation point. During those few privileged weeks we had a view such as correspondents dream about and we began to really enjoy covering this war. We did not have to go to the front. The front had come to us.

Between calls we used to spend the greater part of the day comfortably seated in front of the windows on one of the upper floors, our feet propped on the window sills and binoculars glued to our eyes. We could see, as though it were being staged in a giant open-air theatre for our benefit, the heavy fighting in the trenches south and west of the city. This, of course, was after General Franco had brought up his forces to the city's gates.

Loyalist and enemy infantry could be seen as small dots on the landscape, now moving forward under cover of an artillery barrage, now being forced back, as the constant, intensive fighting for the areas across the Manzanares river surged back and forth. Tanks and Moorish cavalry stood out in relief against the crazy-quilt pattern of zig-zag trenches, then scurried for cover in the wooded patches. Enemy artillery could be located by flashes bright even in the brilliant sunlight. Shellbursts made small puffs on the slopes of the gentle rises to the south of Casa de Campo, the wooded section due west of the city which has seen and still is seeing so many bloody battles.

For days on end there would be little or no progress on either side. Militiamen supported by heavy forces of international brigadiers fought courageously and well against the soldiers of Franco, holding them back across the river which forms the capital's western limits. That deadlock still continues at this writing, months later.

There were many spectacular "dogfights" in the heavens around us. I have seen fleets of fifteen bombing planes escorted by forty or more pursuit planes, attacked by as many of the fast Loyalist pursuit ships. A hundred planes in the air at once! The battles lasted from a few seconds to several minutes. Diving, swooping, circling and spiraling in manoeuvres to get on the other's tail, these great fleets of war planes would stage most of their great combats at

an altitude of between 1,000 and 5,000 feet. Thousands watched from the streets below, cheering the Loyalist planes each time they seemed to have the advantage.

Occasionally, a plane would burst into flames and plunge slantingly downward as incendiary bullets found their mark. The defending anti-aircraft was constantly active during these enemy raids. Strangely enough, they never once succeeded in reaching their mark while I was in Madrid, although the shrapnel puffs sometimes came close. The Loyalist gunners shot at, not in front of, the enemy planes, and the shells burst behind their target.

Sometimes the pilots were able to bale out of their burning ships. I have seen four parachutes drifting lazily in the center of a spectacular aerial battle. Generally, however, they would have no chance to get clear, and perished as their burning planes plunged through roofs of dwellings or in the fighting zones just outside the city limits.

Through our binoculars, we could see clearly the facial expressions of those who, succeeding in baling out over Madrid, desperately pulled at their guy ropes in an effort to land behind their own lines. Sometimes, floating down in their parachutes, they were killed before they reached the ground—shot by militiamen who could not resist the drifting targets. The government, attempting to halt this practice, issued an order: "Don't shoot at parachuting pilots. They may be our own men, and even if they're not, they should not be fired at while in the air. Sometimes we get valuable information from captured pilots." But the militia ignored the order.

Correspondents finally had to give up their choice observation point in the telephone building when the Insurgent artillerymen, discovering that the Loyalists had placed an artillery observation post in the tower of the building, began to aim directly at it. Their marksmanship

was good enough to cause us to move. They placed shells in nearly every floor of the building, making its steel-reinforced frame shiver under the impact. Built along American lines, with huge I-beams welded into a strong skeleton and faced with brick and stone, the telephone building was in no danger of being razed, but the shells went through the outside walls and left great holes in the south and west façades.

As soon as the building would be hit once during a bombardment, we knew more would come. The Insurgents would either let us alone entirely for days at a stretch or train their batteries on us and throw a flock of shells in our direction. We would race down the stairs after the first of the series hit, and stay in the sub-basement until it was safe to come upstairs again. We had many narrow squeaks but fortunately no casualties.

The closest call I had while in that building was when waiting on the fifth floor for a telephone message one November afternoon. A six-inch shell came through the wall of the sixth floor and exploded just above our heads with a shattering blast that made us think the building was coming down. We lost no time in scooting for the basement.

Experts later said the shell must have been spent when it hit, or it would have come through the ceiling. Another shell, hitting at the seventh floor level, clipped out a two-foot section of steel I-beam, knocked down two inside partitions, passed through the twelve-inch concrete floor and went out through the opposite wall without exploding!

When I left Spain the telephone building had been hit forty-one times, but the operators still were sticking to their posts.\*

\* As this book goes to press, the Madrid telephone building has been hit 129 times, but still no casualties!

On the Guadarrama front one day a shell landed so close to the automobile in which a Red Cross doctor and I were riding that the car was lifted clear off the ground by the force of the concussion. It was all I could do to keep from turning over as we swerved off the roadway. The only damage we suffered was a couple of nasty bumps on our heads where we hit the top. Discussing the incident with a group of correspondents later that day, Karl von Wiegand, a veteran who has a record of many wars, said:

"I learned long ago that it's foolish to take too many chances for a story. A dead correspondent is of no earthly use to his outfit and a wounded one is a hell of a nuisance."

Another day while driving into Toledo to cover the siege of the Alcazar, we had a close call. Rebel marksmen in the northeast tower of the fortress saw our car and bullets spurted behind us as we dashed into a lane behind a brick building.

One afternoon as I was returning to the office, just one block from the Ministry of War, I stepped lively as I went past the Ministry. There was no particular reason I could think of why I should, but I did. As I reached the office a moment later a plane shot over and dropped a 225-pound bomb in front of the Ministry, killing 34 persons.

On another occasion while I was walking on the Calle del Cid, just west of the French embassy, a high explosive shell struck the roof of a building I was passing. A piece of stone cornice two feet square was knocked off and struck the sidewalk at my side.

A stray bullet came through my window one night. It passed through the wooden *persiana* and glass and zipped across the chair in front of my typewriter, burying itself in the wall. I had been sitting in that chair a minute before.

I was walking to the embassy another night after I had abandoned my apartment, and had to flatten myself on the

ground when bullets started whizzing. A militiaman's gun had gone off by accident, another militiaman on the other side of the boulevard thought someone was sniping and fired in his direction, and that started the barrage.

All the correspondents can relate similar experiences while walking at night. That was one of the nastiest parts of our job—getting to and from the telephone company in the pitch blackness. In the shadows lurked men with nervous trigger fingers, and their inclination was to shoot first and ask questions afterwards. This random shooting fell off considerably after the government started enforcing a "Save-your-bullets-for-the-front" campaign by taking rifles away from the rearguard.

I have often been asked if I did not become frightened during those dangerous days. Frightened is not the word for it. After a close shave at the front one day I had such a case of nerves that when I was en route to the same front the next morning I ordered the chauffeur to turn around and drive me back to Madrid. Cowardice if you please—call it what you will. I just could not go to the front that day, but I did the next.

Until life there became extremely unhealthy, I stayed on in my apartment, situated just across the street from the Stock Exchange, now a barracks, and one block from the Ministry of Communications. That zone was being bombarded day and night, and nearly all the other American correspondents had already taken refuge in the embassy.

The evening I decided to join them, enemy planes dropped scores of *bengalas*—incendiary flares—all around the area embracing the Ministries of War, Marine and Communications, and the Stock Exchange. Twelve of the flares landed in the broad avenue in front of my house and illuminated the whole area as brightly as daylight.



The *portero* and I dashed out in the street and threw water on the flares but they had some chemical in them that reacted to water like carbide. The dousing only made them burn the more brightly. The planes were still droning above us and, fearing every second they would unloose a cargo of bombs and blow us to pieces, we scraped buckets of earth from inside the curbing and finally managed to smother the flares.

Bombs, dropped the two previous days, had wrecked part of the Prado museum just behind my place, and torn up a wide section of the avenue a half block west. I decided it was time to get out of there. A telephone call brought an embassy car, and, with two suitcases of clothes I threw together, I joined the crowd of refugees in the embassy building, a one-time ducal palace. There were about 150 refugees there including the Puerto Rican and Filipino members of the colony. The United States state-department had urged all holders of American passports to leave Madrid, but there were many who had to stay either for business reasons or because they had no place to go if they left Spain.

Life in the embassy was more or less regimented. There were not sufficient beds for everyone, even with those some of the refugees brought with them. Secretary Eric Wendelin, acting *chargé d'affaires* in the absence of Ambassador Bowers, who had shifted his headquarters to St. Jean de Luz, had found a number of mattresses. Men and women slept dormitory style, the women on the first floor and the men on the second and third floors. Some of the married couples had quarters together, and several lived in the stables adjoining the embassy.

We ate in shifts in an improvised refectory in the basement. The food was necessarily simple and sometimes there was not enough of it, but there were few complaints.

Everyone knew the trouble Captain Frank Cannady went to each day to get any kind of food for us, and the United States government was paying the cost. Capt. Cannady, breeder of fancy poultry and long-time resident of Madrid, had volunteered for the job and often risked his life to bring in foodstuffs from zones under fire.

Colonel Stephen Fuqua, the military attaché, organized the able-bodied men into patrols and appointed each patrol to certain sections of the embassy grounds. We were expecting the enemy to take Madrid from day to day, and feared that the Anarchists might repeat what they had done in other cities they were forced to evacuate. The colonel had secured a number of rifles and pistols and distributed these among the men for use in case of an attack against the embassy. Fortunately we never had to use them.

The newspapermen were the only ones permitted to come and go as they pleased. All other refugees, once inside, had to stay. A physician and nurse were in attendance and a barber came each day. The correspondents found plenty of excitement while handling their jobs, but existence for those who had to stay inside the high iron fence surrounding the embassy grounds became extremely boring. The women helped out with the maintenance of the embassy, doing the cleaning and cooking. The staff of servants was small and could not be increased.

The men played cards and discussed everything but Spanish politics. That subject was forbidden. One girl became so bored during the many hours free time on her hands that she secured a jig saw puzzle and solved it over and over again. The children played in the spacious gardens, but were hurried inside whenever the planes came over. The evenings were not so dull. There were several musicians among the refugees and small musicales were

staged. There was not supposed to be any liquor on the premises but the men had smuggled in a generous supply and whiled away late hours drinking toasts to the end of the war. There were plenty of books in the library.

Regulations meant for the refugees were posted on the bulletin board in front of the chancellor's office each day. One of the notices, posted after a party the night before had run through midnight, probably will be remembered by the refugees after they have forgotten all the rest. It said:

"No social intercourse in the public rooms after 10 o'clock."

One of the refugees was a young Italo-American pilot, Vicente Patriarca. Patriarca, flying for Franco, had baled out behind Loyalist lines when his plane was shot down, and he had been captured. Taken for an Italian, he was at first destined to be shot, but when it was learned he was New York born, Wendelin intervened in his behalf. Minister of Air Prieto, unbeknown to the militia, who were demanding Patriarca's life, released him to Wendelin's care after the Insurgents had agreed to release a Polish pilot who had been captured while flying for the Loyalists.

Sheltered in the embassy until such time as he could be put on a boat at Valencia, the eighteen-year-old son of a New York barber gradually overcame the terror which had made him a pitiful figure after his capture. He became one of the most animated of the embassy's guests. Having recovered something of his bravado, Patriarca would run out in the embassy gardens each time a "dog-fight" was staged overhead and excitedly point out what he believed were faults in the manoeuvring. "God, if I could only be up there, I'd show them," he used to say, whereupon someone would promptly hush him up. When arrangements for his evacuation were completed, Patriarca was

spirited incognito to Valencia for fear that the militia might seize him en route. The foreign correspondents obligingly withheld Patriarca's name from the list of departing Americans until after he was safely on board the U.S.S. *Raleigh*.

There was coal for cooking but not for heating and the embassy was like an ice-box at night. We had plenty of blankets. I had a cot sent out from my house, so I didn't have to sleep on the floor. We correspondents were quite contented except when the firing from the heavy artillery kept us awake. We had busy days and needed rest. Nearly all the scribes had secured little stores of food and drink, and we would sit up until about midnight eating and drinking and speculating on how long the damned war would last.

The front line had crawled into University City, less than a mile from the embassy, and some nights the heavy artillery and hand grenades and machine guns and rifles joined in such horrible cacaphony that sleep was impossible. We would go out on the roof of the embassy and watch the artillery flashes streak the sky and wonder if this was the night. Everybody thought it would be soon. How could the city's defenders last so long? But they're still lasting as this is being written.

One morning after a heavy night-bombing had torn up much of the center of town, I talked with one of the censors in the telephone building. The censorship had been moved there from the Ministry of State after the correspondents had strenuously protested running the gauntlet of fire laid down around the Ministry. The censor was putting up pieces of cardboard to fill the gaps in the broken panes of his office windows.

"Why stop the ventilation?" I remarked. The censor looked at me sourly.

"I don't wish bad luck to any of you writers," he said in his difficult English, "but the best thing that could happen here would be if the American or English embassy was bombed. That might shock your countries into helping us win the war quickly and put a stop to all this."

That remark stuck in my mind. Several nights later I was on my cot staring at the ceiling, unable to sleep. Suddenly there was a drone above. Another raid, I mused. But the plane did not pass on toward the south or west front, or toward the center of town. It seemed to hang directly over my bedroom. I sat up in bed and listened to it circling, circling, just over the embassy, the sound of its motors getting louder as the plane came lower. The anti-aircraft batteries were strangely silent. I waited three minutes more and then what the censor had said flashed suddenly through my mind. I arose quickly and woke United Press man Lester Ziffren, who slept nearest me. "Ziff" sat up and after he had listened for a few seconds said:

"Let's get everybody up. This doesn't look good to me."

We shook them. They awoke and tumbled downstairs with us. There we found the occupants of the other dormitories, who also had become alarmed by the strange behavior of the plane. We looked at one another nervously in the candle-light. For another three minutes that plane circled above the embassy, then sped off toward the south, and we all went back to bed.

One week later the English embassy, less than a quarter mile away, was bombed by a lone night-raider who circled over it for some time before pulling his bomb lever. Several of those in the embassy were injured, but fortunately none were killed. The damage to the building was heavy. The Loyalist press made a great stir about the bombing, using it as a "compelling argument" why England and other

countries should "intervene against these barbarians who have no respect for the residences of foreign diplomats." The hullabaloo died suddenly, however, and the incident was not referred to again. Everyone wondered why.

Months afterward, when I was leaving Valencia on a British destroyer, bound for Marseilles, I found traveling on the same boat one of the secretaries of the English embassy in Madrid. He had been transferred to another post, and had picked the destroyer as the safest way of getting out of Spain.

We had a smoke on deck and I said:

"Now that we are out of there, can I guess what was the lowdown on the embassy bombing?"

He looked at me oddly and puffed on his pipe.

"Guess away," he said.

"Would I be far wrong if I thought the Rebels had nothing to do with that bombing?"

"You would not," he replied. "Our investigation proved quite conclusively that the plane which bombed us was a Loyalist plane. Seems as though they're capable of almost anything in their effort to secure English intervention."

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## CHAPTER IX

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### The Spanish Cheka in Action

AS THE SPANISH WAR ENTERED ITS INTERNATIONAL PHASE and became a little European war, the Madrid-Valencia government suddenly developed two great fears—of espionage and “defeatism.” Spies and enemy propagandists, it feared, might upset the whole course of the struggle. It took means to eliminate, as far as it could, this internal danger. Foreigners and Spaniards in Loyalist territory learned to tread softly and guard their speech. The slightest misstep might bring accusations of treason. Espionage was made a capital offense. Expressed or implied doubt over an ultimate victory became “counter-revolutionary” and meant at least a long prison term.

The full forces of the recently augmented secret police were assigned to the weeding out from the Loyalist rear-guard of all those whose absolute faith in, and loyalty to, the Valencia government might be in the slightest suspect. These agents, known as members of the Investigation Brigade, but more popularly referred to as the Spanish Cheka, began to lurk everywhere. Their efficiency can not be questioned. Cafés and hotel lounges, particularly those frequented by military men, members of the diplomatic corps and foreign correspondents, are objects of their special attention. Little escapes them.

If you are a resident, they know everything that is to

be known about you—your daily habits, your associations, sometimes your most closely guarded secrets. If you are a newcomer, no time is wasted in ascertaining who you are and your reasons for being in Spain. An incautious remark made to a café acquaintance, a chance question, however innocent, about some military operation, and you may find yourself in the toils of the ever-vigilant Cheka. Once arrested, you are due for hours, perhaps days and weeks, of questioning. The benefit of the doubt is on the government side always. You must prove your innocence of intention, and this sometimes is difficult to do to the complete satisfaction of super-suspicious grillers. An army officer I knew was arrested because he was seen to exchange greetings with a member of one of the foreign legations. He was suspected of attempting to court friendship with a view to securing diplomatic asylum. A French jewelry salesman, resident of Spain for more than twenty years, was twice arrested and finally was deported because he once sold former King Alfonso a ring. A young woman of the most-ancient-trade was arrested because she was seen on three successive evenings in the company of Loyalist pilots in a café where she made her headquarters. A foreign correspondent was arrested seven times and finally had to flee Spain when he was charged with seeking military information—information vital to him in the building of his stories.

There are recorded hundreds of similar cases. A chance word during a telephone conversation over one of the numerous "tapped" lines; an inadvertent scrap of paper thrown into a waste-basket instead of burned; an unhappy selection of a phrase in a letter written or received, and there may be many unpleasant moments in store.

Among "defeatist" crimes were included: the listening to radio broadcasts from Rebel territory, or the repeating



of any part of such a broadcast; slightest criticism of any government official or decision of any official; disparagement of any Loyalist military manoeuvre or hint of any military set-back; complaint about shortage of food or any other commodity; failure to effuse optimism over the outcome of the war; commission of any act which might be interpreted as "counter-revolutionary."

One device the *Cheka* employed in an effort to ferret out conspirators was to seize any two persons walking together, separate them quickly out of earshot of each other, and demand to know what they were talking about at the moment they were separated. The replies then would be checked against each other and if they failed to tally, the pair was arrested. Sometimes the sheer fright of being so seized made the victims stutter and forget what they HAD been talking about. Folks quickly learned that it paid to agree on a "topic" of conversation before starting out for a walk, so that they would have their answers ready. Thus:

"If we're stopped, we were discussing plans to go to the cinema tonight."

Once arrested, one was never free of suspicion. The slightest pretext would serve to bring him before one of the "Popular Tribunals," the outstanding characteristic of whose justice is speed. It is only in rare instances there is appeal against the decisions of these Tribunals.

In Barcelona, women demonstrating against the shortage of bread, were fired on and the gunmen later were labeled by the government "Fascist sharpshooters." This form of "counter-revolutionary" activity ceased abruptly.

José Robles, professor of romance languages at Johns Hopkins University and resident of the United States for sixteen years, was one of those to feel the effects of this vigorous counter-espionage service. Coming to Madrid

with his wife, his son Francisco, 16, and his American-born daughter, Margarita, 14, for a summer vacation with relatives, he was caught there by the civil war. His knowledge of English, French, and other languages and of world affairs in general, led the Loyalists to place him as liaison officer in the Ministry of War. During spare hours in the afternoon, he was assigned to instruct Russian ambassador Marcel Rosenberg and several of Rosenberg's aides in Spanish.

He was, in his capacity at the War Ministry, in contact with military observers and newspapermen, and was well liked by all the Americans for his courtesy, his willingness to oblige, and, above all, for his ability to see things from an American viewpoint. He told me he had no personal interest in the Spanish political situation, but, finding it impossible to return to the United States because he was a Spanish citizen, said he had resolved to make the best of his predicament. The *Cheka*, he told me, had decided he was being entirely too friendly with foreigners in Madrid and had threatened his life. So he went to Valencia, where the government had already moved, and continued working in the belief that he was safe there.

One day, after I had had cocktails with Professor and Mrs. Robles in a Valencian café, Professor Robles was arrested. The sharp ears of counter-espionage agents had heard him recounting a War Ministry joke involving the misfortune of a Loyalist general who had stumbled into a puddle of water and been forced to change trousers with a much more portly aide.

Mrs. Robles came to me in tears, believing her husband had been shot, but a check revealed that he was being held in a building designated as "*Carcel de los Extranjeros*"—Foreigners' jail. She was not permitted to see him, but was allowed to send him some extra clothing. Mrs. Robles'

pleas to the Russian embassy were ignored. Then she begged that the American embassy take an interest in the case because of the American nationality of her daughter. The request brought expressions of regret. Our neutrality could not be jeopardized in the slightest. Military Attaché Col. Stephen O. Fuqua paid Professor Robles an unofficial visit purely out of personal friendship and found him well but wondering why he had been imprisoned. Mrs. Robles and her children were destitute until her son succeeded in getting a job as messenger for the State Department.

Early in January, while I was in Valencia, I received a query from my New York office:

"FRIENDS OF HOPKINS PROFESSOR ROBLES UNHEARD NEWS OF HIM SINCE OCTOBER REQUEST WHEREABOUTS"

I replied, in a message marked "to be telephoned to London," as follows:

"ROBLES IMPRISONED SINCE EARLY DECEMBER STOP CHARGES ESPIONAGE LATER AMENDED TO QUOTE INDISCRETION UNQUOTE EMBASSY TAKING UNOFFICIAL INTEREST IN CASE."

I had marked it for the phone because I wanted to be sure it was sent. On cabled matter, we never could be sure. After waiting five hours for my call, I phoned the chief of censorship, Rubio Hidalgo, and asked him the reason for the delay.

"There is *very* bad service today, Mr. Knoblaugh," he told me blandly. "It would be better to send it by cable."

"My only reason in phoning it is to be sure it gets there," I told him. "Has it been okehed?"

"Oh, yes."

"Just as it was written?"

"A word or two was cut out, but the substance is there," Rubio said. "Shall I send it by cable, then?"

I told him to go ahead.

Several months later when I was back in New York, chief cable editor John Evans asked me:

"How about that Robles chap? I sent you several messages about him but never received a reply."

"You didn't receive my message, then, telling you he was in prison?" I asked, realizing how I had been duped.

"Not a word. Here's the correspondence from one of our Baltimore members. You might write them a short note explaining the situation."

I did, and saw it in print a few days later under a Baltimore date-line. This apparently got back to Spain. Not long afterwards I saw another story in the same newspaper, also under a Baltimore date-line, to the effect that the Loyalist Minister of Communications had written Johns Hopkins assuring them Robles *had never been imprisoned* and that he had "disappeared" somewhere, the minister knew not where!

The word "disappear" has come to have a sinister connotation in Spain these days. Ever since I read that story, I have wondered if it meant what I feared it might mean.

The peculiarly choice opportunities afforded by the chaotic situation netted rich profits to those shrewd and unscrupulous enough to convert these opportunities into lush war rackets. Bribery and blackmail in connection with "protection" sold to men of wealth, and manipulation of prices of prime commodities were the two chief forms of racketeering blossoming from the civil conflict. Numerous cases have come to light of fortunes being exchanged in return for promises of safety to unhappy non-sympathizers with the Loyalist cause. In some cases the racketeers keep faith with their victims, effectively concealing them, supplying them with forged political credentials permitting them to circulate freely, or helping them to leave the country.

More often, however, they have covered their own tracks by taking the hunted ones for a *paseo* after taking their money.

A certain Central American diplomat told me of one instance he said was typical of the *modus operandi* of the war racketeers. According to this story a wealthy Madrid manufacturer, marked for death because he had discharged a number of employees participating in the general revolutionary strike of October, 1934, was promised immunity in exchange for 50,000 pesetas. He paid the money, which was all the cash he had on hand, and felt he was safe. A few days later he sought protection in the legation of the man who told me the story, reporting that he had received further demands which he was unable to pay because his bank account, like that of other Spaniards, had been impounded by the government.

The man's wife then was seized as hostage and a note was sent the husband advising him she would be killed unless he raised 1,000,000 pesetas or surrendered himself. Unable to comply, and unwilling to see his wife slain, he left the legation and presented himself to her captors. According to the woman's story when she fled terror-stricken to the legation, the manufacturer was killed before her eyes.

The widow of a Barcelona magistrate told me her husband had been killed after paying considerable sums of money for "protection" against terrorists he had sentenced for blowing up a bridge during the October, 1934, movement, and who, upon being amnestied, sought him out. There were dozens and scores of such cases. The government, try as it might, could not halt the practice.

Profiteering by cornering commodities, scarce owing to wartime restrictions, was another big racket which the government could not halt despite threats of heavy punish-

ment. Meat, flour, sugar, olive oil, coffee, salt, leather goods, soap and tinned goods brought huge profits to those speculating in them. I recall one incident lambasted by the press. While Madrid was going without bread, a Barcelona anarchist center was found to have cached tons of wheat, holding it for higher prices.

A third form of racketeering which prospered during the first months of the year but which has now almost disappeared due to increased vigilance along the Spanish frontiers, was the sale of forged passports. Certain South and Central American diplomats were credited with having realized fortunes in this way. A member of the diplomatic representatives of small European countries found emulation of the *Scarlet Pimpernel* to be far more lucrative than diplomacy.

Appropriation for private use of confiscated Rightist goods and valuables was another common practice during the first months of the war. Police have been working for months in an attempt to locate vast treasures in precious metals, gems, money and negotiable securities taken from churches, convents, palaces and private apartments. When the government discovered that many of the raiders, organized in self-appointed "committees," were keeping part or all of the proceeds of their forays, it ordered that henceforth only duly appointed government representatives would be empowered to search and seize. All confiscated goods were ordered turned in to these proper authorities at once, and heavy penalties were set up for what the government termed "deliberate robbery of the national treasury." The government had been counting on the confiscated wealth to go a long way toward financing the war, but had had to dip deeply into its gold reserve when the war booty failed to come up to expectations.

The preventive measures were taken too late. Most of

the wealth found by the raiders had already been removed. Great quantities had found their way across the frontier. Police, believing most of it still in Spain, were fine-tooth-combing the Loyalist areas when I left Spain. Some of the smaller *cachés* have been found, especially in Barcelona where common criminals released by the post-election amnesty had, as militiamen, turned their talents to profitable purpose. But the larger stores police are sure exist have thus far defied discovery. Various traps have been set for the miscreants, but with minor success. Agents frequenting the pleasure resorts keep on the lookout for lavish spenders, "stool-pigeons" tread the underworld sections, and foreign agents in the employ of the government pose as jewelry merchants seeking good buys. But only the less cautious—a few of the "smaller fry"—have fallen into these traps.

The big fellows—and the government believes the size of the stakes has caused operations to be systematized by well organized gangs with clever "fences" handling the stuff gradually through outside contacts—still are uncaught. These are believed to have working for them experienced jewelers who melt down church ornaments of precious metals and reset the gems that bedecked them. Many of the beautifully wrought Virgin's crowns and filigree decorations of gold and platinum, priceless because of the handiwork in their construction, thus would lose much of their value, but the risk of disposing of them would be less.

Individuals working privately in the extra-legal confiscations are believed to have "salted" down their loot in the expectation of being able to enjoy prosperity during the lean years that will follow the war. One such individual whose confidence I enjoyed showed me a shoe box full of rings, bracelets, watches, ear-rings and other valuable trinkets he told me he would like to dispose of "for what-

ever he could get for them." A waiter whom I knew whispered that he could show me where some *gargas*—bargains—could be found in jewelry if I knew anyone who was interested. He was careful to explain that he himself had taken no part in "locating" them—that a militiaman friend of his on the Aragon front had them. But there would be a commission in it for both of us if I could find some "safe" buyer, he told me. I was offered a new German-make camera which retails in Spain for nearly 2,000 pesetas (\$150.00), for 300 pesetas. The militiaman who had it told me the camera had "been given him as payment for a favor." Inasmuch as he didn't know how to use it he wanted to convert it into cash.

Several other like bargains tempted me, but I somehow passed them by. Needing a couple of suitcases and being unable to find anything except paper composition satchels in the luggage shops, I did pick up a brace of fine Gladstones that way, however. All the good leather luggage in the shops had either been appropriated by the militia or sold to the great horde of politicians who succeeded in having themselves sent abroad—as "attachés" to some embassy or legation, or as members of one of the dozens of mysterious "commissions" whose main mission outside of Spain, so far as any of us could gather, was to put the war behind them. I bought the two Gladstones, fine unsplit leather and very slightly used, for about five dollars in American money. The militiaman who sold them to me threw in an embroidered and initialed linen bed sheet which I left in Spain, but I made good use of the bags.

Many of the mistresses of the militiamen now live in better furnished apartments and dress in better style than they ever would have imagined before the war, thanks to the unwilling generosity of those whose homes were ransacked for clothing and furniture. I knew one militiaman



to have brought suitcases full of silk stockings, slippers, silk under-garments and trinkets to his girl-friend after a raid on the home of a wealthy Rightist whose wife had been one of Madrid's best dressed women. Among other gifts this young man had been able to bring to his sweetheart were three fur coats.

Loyalist Spain's No. 1 Culprit, as far as the raiding racket was concerned, was Garcia Atadell, the ace of aces of the government's corps of secret investigators. Credited with discovering more hidden fortunes and more spies than any other operative on the government payroll, Atadell was honest for awhile and delivered up to his superiors the proceeds of his discoveries. The press hailed the former linotype operator who had taken up sleuthing at the beginning of the war as a national hero, and held him up as an example to the other agents.

Atadell disappeared one day with several trunks full of loot. He was later reported to be living a life of luxury in Paris. In an effort to discourage others who might plan to emulate Atadell, the government announced that Atadell had "died" at the hands of special agents who had been put on his trail. The announcement was carried in the daily press in December under the significant caption: "Thus ends the life of an arch-traitor to the cause."

Atadell did die, but not until later. He was captured when a ship which was taking him to South America and safety had to put in at the Canary Islands for repairs. Recognized by Rebel officers at the dock, he was taken to Sevilla for trial. Found guilty of murder during robbery, Atadell was garotted as a common criminal on July 16th.

A large share of the abuses on the Loyalist side has been credited to the common criminals liberated with the political prisoners in the general amnesty which followed the February, 1936, elections. Extremist leaders demanded

and secured the freedom of these criminals on the grounds that the courts which sentenced them, having been set up under the old capitalistic régimes, were incapable of administering "proletarian justice." Given arms and authority, many of these ex-convicts lost no time in reverting to lawlessness. The Generalitat Ministry of Interior, answering charges that it had failed to curtail crime in Catalonia, declared:

"Before order can be re-established in Catalonia, we must round up the irresponsible criminals now loose in our territory. Where are the thousands of murderers, robbers and other evil-doers who gained their freedom when the gates of the prisons were opened? They were armed along with the rest, but they are not at the front. We must find them and put them back where they belong before we can hope to have order here."

A few of these ex-prisoners have, however, distinguished themselves on the side of law and order since they were released. The most notable instance of this has been the career of José Garcia Oliver, anarchist Minister of Justice in the Popular Front cabinet. Garcia Oliver was serving an indeterminate term for robbery when the amnesty was declared. He has proved a popular and efficient minister. Impartial legal minds termed his decree giving equal rights to women "one of the finest bits of legal terminology in the Spanish civil code."

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## CHAPTER X

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### Hurdling Censorship Barriers

CENSORSHIP, THE CHIEF FOE OF THE FOREIGN CORRESPONDENT in many enlightened countries of the world today, was practically a stranger to the new Spanish republic before the outbreak of the present war. With the exception of a short period during the October, 1934, Leftist rebellion, when a partial censorship was imposed but quickly lifted, we could write as freely as we liked without fearing that presentation of facts might bring down on our heads the wrath of a supersensitive administration. In those halcyon days we covered the news strictly on its merits, just as most newspapermen working in the United States do today. No influence or pressure was brought to bear to make us color our dispatches in the tints of an enlightened era. Spain had no message it wanted carried abroad. It was content to pursue its happy, carefree way; have its occasional revolution, and then settle back to a period of calm without preoccupying itself in the least about the foreign press.

The war has changed all that. Rigid censorship on both sides now makes the correspondent weigh his words and watch his actions lest his usefulness to his paper or agency suddenly be terminated. The work of the foreign correspondent in Spain is no longer, and probably never again will be, the pleasurable sinecure it was up to July 18, 1936.

I am not qualified to comment on the Nationalists' system of news control, because I have not come directly in contact with it. But from my conversations with many foreign correspondents who have been covering the war from General Franco's side I can say with assurance that the Nationalists have not even remotely approximated the degree of efficiency the Loyalists have achieved in this direction. I can testify, from long actual experience, to the efficacy of the elaborate combination of censorship and propaganda the Popular Front government was able to put into flawless working order in an astonishingly short time.

The Loyalist propaganda machine has reached such a high state of perfection that virtually every line of news emanating directly or indirectly from Loyalist Spain—from the sources upon which correspondents in Spain are dependent for their reports, or from one of the numerous Loyalist-subsidized "news agencies" set up abroad—fits like a jig-saw piece in the intricate pattern of Popular Front policies. More potent than all its armies, propaganda now is indisputably the most effective weapon the Madrid-Valencia government has at its command.

There was a kind of censorship in effect in Loyalist Spain from the first day of the war, but it was so faulty and so full of easily found loopholes that it more often than not defeated its own purpose. The main trouble at that time was a shortage of men the government believed qualified to act as censors. Not that there was any scarcity of Spaniards with linguistic talents, but the government distrusted the loyalty of any Spaniard who had developed language ability abroad. Travel involved expense. The government reasoned that anyone having possessed funds for this purpose scarcely could be trusted to defend wholeheartedly the interests of the proletariat.

So it called for volunteers among those minor government employees enjoying its patronage who, by private study at home, might have acquired some knowledge of foreign languages. The response was not very gratifying either to the government or to the foreign press corps. A Norwegian correspondent was unable to cable anything during the first two weeks of the war because there was no one able to read his stories, and a representative of a Czecho-Slovakian paper, faced with the same situation, finally had to transmit his news in German. Some of the volunteers spoke French fairly well but those who secured censors' jobs on the assumption that they knew English had such a limited knowledge of our tongue that it was an easy matter for the American correspondents to hoodwink them.

News matter sent "overhead"—by cable or radiogram—had to be accompanied by written translations in Spanish, but on stories to be transmitted by telephone to London or Paris for relay to New York, we translated orally. It was a simple matter to mistranslate, revamping the meaning of the most pregnant sentences to make them sound innocuous to the unsuspecting censor. Once the censor's rubber-stamp had been put on our "copy," we were safe. An "interventor" sat beside us at the switch-board in the telephone exchange while we dictated to our offices outside Spain, on guard against our sending anything not on the censored sheets, but these men, mostly employees of the telephone company, worked independently of the censors.

Their job was to follow our copy closely, keeping one foot on a cut-off pedal that went down the instant one would try to read through portions struck out by the censor or attempted to *ad lib* anything not on the censored sheets, but they made no effort to re-censor our stories. While watching the copy, the interventor listened to both

ends of the conversation through a supplementary set of headphones.

Telephone communication was necessarily slow because of the heavy volume of news and diplomatic calls over the single emergency circuit skirting Rebel territory to the north and east of Madrid—the line ran southeast to Valencia and then north to the frontier through Barcelona—but it was more reliable than “overhead” transmission. Adding this to the fact that we could get more news through this way than any other, it is easy enough to understand why we sent most of our war news by telephone. We admittedly “got by with murder” during the first weeks of the war. Comparing notes in some café afterward, the correspondents would gloat over what they had been able to “put over” on the censors in their coverage of the news of the day.

We quickly learned several other stunts which successfully outwitted the censorship during the early stages of the conflict. We were required to provide duplicate copies of our stories when they were typewritten but no duplicate was asked when the matter was in longhand. This made it easy to write in an extra line or two on the longhand copy after the censor’s approval had been stamped on it.

Some of the correspondents secured red pencils similar to those used by the censors and would write the word “*nulo*” at the margin of censored lines they were particularly desirous of getting through. This subterfuge would mislead the interventor into thinking that the censor had reconsidered the stricken portions and reversed his own first opinion. We tested the command of English possessed by the various interventors and if we found that certain sounds escaped them when we dictated rapidly, it was a simple matter to insert or omit a negative contraction which would change the meaning of our story completely.

Some of the correspondents took advantage of the fact that during the first months we were permitted to send personal messages along with the copy. Many a "hot" story was coded in some innocent-appearing message like "need more expense money" or "please advise my family that I am safe and well."

Another trick we quickly learned was to keep "hot" matter out of the lead paragraph when, as was almost always the case at that time, that particular matter was adverse to the Loyalist cause. The censors, knowing that the American style of newspaper-writing places the prime news in the first paragraph, watched our leads with eagle eye. By starting out with an inoffensive statement favorable to the cause and burying the real story down two or three paragraphs, we occasionally got a yarn through which would have been cut to pieces had we followed the orthodox style of news writing. Cable editors back home cursed us at first for apparently missing the sensation in the matter transmitted. They soon learned there was method in our ignorance and looked for the real lead in the middle or at the end of the yarn.

We were not allowed to report as such the executions of generals and other high officers of the army during the first weeks of the war but persuaded the censors to permit us to send them as "deaths." The government put a stop to the sending of this news after it learned that we were sending the word "death" in quotation marks, making the inference unmistakable to the reader.

Some of the censors and interventors had handy human weaknesses. After we had learned their vulnerable spots we applied psychology to a fare-thee-well. One censor, we found out, was a stamp collector. We immediately began working overtime rummaging waste-baskets looking for canceled stamps. If this censor was on duty when we

brought our copy in, we would not show it to him until after we had made our little contribution to his collection. Then, while he beamingly fondled the coveted bits of paper, we would carelessly lay our story before him. Sometimes he would be so wrapped up in his new acquisitions that he would approve our copy without even looking at it. If he did examine the story his high good humor was almost certain to be reflected in a minimum of red pencillings.

Another censor was extremely proud of his knowledge of opera. We read everything we could on all the operas we had ever heard of to be able to hold a conversation with him on his favorite subject just before he was to work on our copy. Still another fancied himself an authority on American slang, and never failed to brighten up when we would preface our visit with a "Hello, old-timer, it's sure a swell day today" or "Is everything O.K., chief?"

Slang came in handy in another way during these first weeks of the war. The American vernacular possessed by some of the interventors was virtually nil. During those first days when we were permitted to chat with our Paris and London offices after dictating our stories, we frequently indulged in its use. By telling London that "the big shots were getting ready to take a run-out powder" I was able to scoop the other correspondents on the fact that the government was preparing to flee to Valencia.

During these days each censor was allowed to apply his personal criterion on news which could and could not be sent. Sometimes the night censors would pass matter cut out by the day men and *vice versa*. In our office we made it a point to repeat, at least once, any news eliminated from our copy in the hope that the second time a more liberal censor would be on duty.

These inconsistencies in the censorship sometimes made



us fume, especially when one writer would be fortunate enough to squeeze through a story the others had but could not send. This would make the rest look very bad back home. One of our pet peeves was the time we had to lose because of "official" telephone calls. These, meaning any call from or to the government, or from or to any embassy, legation or consulate, had precedence over our news calls although we had to pay for our calls and official conferences were gratis.

Often after waiting for hours for our call and when finally we were next on the list, we were told that one or more *conferencias oficiales* had been placed just ahead of us and we would have to wait. Sometimes the wait was short. More often it was long enough to make us miss our deadlines. When the call that held us up was made on official diplomatic business, we didn't mind so much. But more often some minor official in some legation would take advantage of the free service to hold long personal chats with some relative or friend. Then we would rage and storm, but it did us no good.

Hardly a day passed but some cabinet minister would place a call with Moscow which would last more than an hour. Operators who "listened in" on these calls revealed that they were made for the purpose of seeking counsel and advice. The government, we learned, took few decisive steps without first consulting the Comintern.

Another thing that annoyed us considerably was the fact that there were two distinct censorships: one affecting articles for home consumption applicable to all the Spanish press, and the other regulating news sent abroad. We were given to understand that the two were not to be confused under any circumstances.

Articles appearing in the various Communist and Anarchist organs often contained information which would

have been extremely interesting abroad, for they threw much light on the chaotic conditions existing among the Popular Front parties. We were not permitted to quote from or refer to any of these illuminating articles.

One of the most serious handicaps we were under in our effort to give accurate coverage on the progress of the war was that we were never allowed to report Loyalist losses or defeats. This was particularly irking inasmuch as our offices, not knowing what we were up against, frequently criticised us for our failure to send at short intervals and with full detail the rapidly changing positions of the respective armies.

One correspondent, protesting the deletion from his copy of a reference to a Loyalist set-back during the 350 mile Nationalist advance through Extremadura to the gates of the capital, was told by the censor:

*"The government has no defeats."*

When a town or position had been captured by the enemy we could mention it only in the most indirect way, and by so wording the story that the loss would appear a long-sighted Loyalist manoeuvre certain to make ultimate victory inevitable. The words "strategic retreat" appeared so much in our copy that we sickened of it and were not altogether sorry when even that protecting cloak was tabooed.

Among the "taboos" set up by the censorship during my stay in Loyalist Spain were:

- (a) Any reference to foreigners or foreign equipment on the Loyalist side. (This restriction was modified somewhat after I left Spain, but never to the extent of giving the Brigadesmen the credit they deserved.)
- (b) Any indication of the inter-party strife which

sometimes caused the Popular Front more concern than the war itself.

- (c) Any reflection on the efficiency of the Loyalist forces or the men at their heads.
- (d) Anything which might indicate the demoralization which had at that time affected a large part of the civil population.

The only way we could cover the Loyalist retreat was to employ inference and trust to the editors back home to build up the story. Thus:

"Yesterday we reached such-and-such a point. Today we could get only as far as such-and-such a point."

It was pretty thin, but that was the best we could do under the circumstances.

During the first four months of the war we were never allowed to make any reference to Loyalist casualties. It was only after the first bombing of Madrid that the government changed its policy in this respect. Then the lid went sky-high and stayed there. According to the best authenticated reports I could get on the effects of that first bombing, there were eight dead, including three women, and an unknown number injured.

How to cover a bombing of a modern European capital without putting in an estimate of the casualties? The correspondents went into a huddle. Inasmuch as I had my story already written, they nominated me to go into press chief Luis Rubio Hidalgo's office and see whether we couldn't say something about the dead.

He glanced at my story and, to my surprise, said:

"Sure, you can send it. Only there were more dead than this. This kind of news is good for us." And he slapped the stamp down without cutting a line!

I came out with the good news. From that moment on the number of casualties in any bombing or shelling

of any civilian population has depended solely upon the individual correspondent's imagination. Some special correspondents went to such lengths to "grab the play" that we agency men had to give them a talking to. We were receiving too many queries from our offices wondering why we didn't have as many dead in our stories as the "specials" had in theirs.

One English correspondent, who wrote thrilling "front line" adventures from a comfortable seat in a Madrid bar, overheard a remark that Getafe, twelve miles south of Madrid, had been bombed. The Englishman thereupon wrote a graphic "eye-witness" story of the bombing and his touching description of "seventy little children blown to pieces" brought inquiring messages from all our offices.

A few correspondents did practically all their work in this fashion. Others, to enliven their imaginative tales with a touch of realism, "pirated" news from the telephone exchange room where we dictated. There were no private booths. We had to send our copy at the top of our voices to make London or Paris hear. The news "pirates" would listen patiently while two or three correspondents sent really eye-witness stories, and then write thrillers which incorporated the best points they had heard. Sometimes correspondents would get queries on their own "exclusives" which had been elaborated so extensively their offices never recognized them.

We used the courier route in smuggling some of our stories out. Hendaye, Port-Bou, Gibraltar and Perpignan date-lines were employed to throw the government off the scent. But rigid search at the frontiers soon halted this practice. A young American photographer who volunteered to take some articles out for me was caught with them in his shoes and spent three days in jail at Port-Bou.

At first we always received the queries sent by our

New York office, whether we were allowed to answer them or not. The first knowledge I had that censorship had begun to intercept certain queries was one afternoon when I received a cable service message—that is, a message sent by the company correcting an error in transmission. It read:

“CHANGE MESSAGE FILED (TIME CLEARED LONDON OFFICE) TO 30000 INSTEAD OF 3000.”

I looked in the file of “messages received” but found no query received either that day or on any previous day with the figure 3,000 in it. I called the censorship office and asked them if they knew anything about it. Censor Winter, a pleasant young Polish Communist, said he would see and call me back later. He did.

“You received the correcting message by mistake,” he told me. “The message to which it refers was one from your office which was held up here.”

I asked him if he could not tell me what the message was about, but he said he had his orders. So I called press chief Rubio Hidalgo:

“If you are going to stop our incoming messages, we will never know that they were sent us. New York will think we are ignoring them,” I told him.

“That is unfortunate, but we consider it necessary,” he said, politely but firmly. He would not even give me an inkling of what the query contained.

I tacked a message on the end of a story I had to phone later that day, thinking to warn the cable desk:

“INFORMATIVE: INCOMING MESSAGES NOW SUBJECT TO CENSORSHIP.”

The censors deleted the message. I again called Rubio.

“If they don’t receive some kind of an answer to their query, they will think something happened to it and keep

on sending messages until they *do* get an answer," I protested.

"Don't lose any sleep worrying about that, *amigo*," he said. "If more queries come about it, you won't receive them."

"But it is only fair that you let me advise our office if you are going to begin censoring incoming messages," I insisted. I could hear him laugh gently as he replied:

"*Begin?* My dear Mr. Knoblaugh, we have been doing that for some time but you didn't know it."

Our work in covering the war was particularly difficult because we were deprived of our ordinary standards of comparison—newspaper clippings showing our own and our rivals' work. Foreign newspapers and news magazines which we had ordinarily purchased at the kiosks were not permitted to enter Spain now. Batches of clippings sent us by our New York offices were turned back at the frontier. When some newcomer arrived with a newspaper which had escaped seizure at the frontier, we read it greedily, no matter how old it was.

One of the correspondents expressed our feelings well when he said:

"It's just like throwing our stories out the window. We never get to see what we write in print."

The photographers fared worse than we in attempting to cover the war. Nothing that would indicate the confusion existing in Loyalist territory, the woeful inefficiency of the army of irregulars, damage caused by enemy shell fire or the lack of discipline in Loyalist ranks, could be taken. The photographers and newsreel men were given splendid passes authorizing them to take "anything they saw," but if they happened to snap something the government considered injurious to its cause, the passes were forthwith revoked and their cameras were im-

pounded. Anarchist militiamen pursued right into my office a visiting photographer who had been seen pointing his camera at enemy planes flying low over Madrid.

"This is a serious reflection on the efficiency of our anti-aircraft," they said. "The pictures must be destroyed."

I sat in the Paramount News offices in the Capitol theatre where censors were reviewing a newsreel of the dynamiting of the Alcazar in Toledo. Part of the explosion was ordered deleted to make it appear as though artillery fire and not dynamite had caused the damage.

One of the Paramount photographers took a picture of a group of Loyalist riflemen "executing" the huge stone statue of Christ that dominated the *Cerro de Los Angeles*, geographical center of Spain a few kilometers south of Madrid. He succeeded in getting it out of the country. When "stills," furnished us by agreement, were published abroad, the government was furious. Our office manager was called on the carpet but solemnly vowed he knew nothing about the picture. The government spluttered for several days but could do nothing.

Of course the censorship now has changed completely. The government gradually learned almost all our tricks and found means to circumvent them. It employed experienced foreigners—Russian-trained Americans, Poles, Frenchmen, Austrians and others whose years in the business gave them excellent qualifications for the work.

Floyd Gibbons, well-known American news commentator, came to Spain to broadcast directly from the war zone, but gave up the job in disgust and went back home after a few days. He had had to submit his copy to the censor's office twenty-four hours in advance of each broadcast, which meant that the news he could give would already be printed at home, and interpretative matter he

attempted to include to offset the lack of news value in his broadcasts had been eliminated completely.

"I've worked in many countries and under many a censorship, but none so unreasonable as this one," Gibbons complained just before he left Spain.

One large newspaper agency pulled the prize "boner" of the war by prematurely releasing an advance story containing a detailed description of the "capture" of Madrid. Written by the agency's London office without the Madrid correspondent's knowledge, the story went into great detail describing the "entry" of the Nationalist troops—the "resistance met and overcome at the barricades"—the "occupancy of the ministries and the triumphal running-up of the Nationalist bi-color." It was a powerful, graphic story and had Madrid fallen at that time, the description might well have "stood up" for several editions.

When the Nationalist battering-ram crossed the Manzanares river and forced a wedge into the northwest section of the city, the agency's Madrid representative, knowing nothing about the story that had been written, sent a coded flash "FRANCO ENTERS MADRID." The London office, erroneously assuming that this meant the fall of the capital, released the advance, thereby perpetrating one of the greatest reportorial hoaxes since the false armistice of 1918. The censorship would permit none of us in Madrid to make any reference to the occupancy of University City for twenty-four hours. Then we were limited to a brief announcement that "a few stragglers had succeeded in filtering into the city but that they were surrounded and their capture was but a matter of hours."

Meanwhile the story prematurely released had been printed everywhere and carried on the radio. Franco sym-



pathizers throughout the world sent floods of congratulatory telegrams addressed to him at the Ministry of War. Indignant Loyalist officials naturally blamed the Madrid correspondent for the story and it took a great deal of explaining on the hapless man's part to keep from being thrown out of Spain.

The "battle of the ether waves," waged simultaneously with that going on in the trenches, was one of the most interesting sidelights of the war, particularly in connection with radioed news reports. At times the air turned almost blue as Loyalist and Nationalist radio orators let their emotions run away with them, and hurled invectives calculated to scorch the ear-drums of their respective adversaries.

The biggest radio station in the possession of the Loyalists was Radio España on the same wave-length as the Rebel station at Sevilla. The marathon of interference set up by this station broke all world records for continuous broadcasting. For more than one hundred days and until the single pair of power tubes the Loyalists had for this station finally broke down, Radio España kept going without a moment's stop. Later, when the tubes had been replaced, only intermittent programs were broadcast.

During the marathon, however, the Radio España station filled the ether every minute of the day and night. Speeches, official pronouncements, phonograph records, and an interference disc, calculated to drown out the Rebel station, kept various shifts of operators busy. The interference was put on at its loudest during the periods scheduled for the official Nationalist communiqués. Only with the most sensitive receiving sets could we pierce this interference and get the enemy's official reports of activities for the day.

In this connection it is only fair to say that not once

during all those months did newspapermen or neutral military observers catch the Rebel official radio in a deliberate misrepresentation of facts as we knew them.

The official Loyalist reports, designed to keep up morale rather than to furnish accurate information, were more often than not at wide variation with the truth. The unofficial Rebel stations were as bad, but all the neutral observers, and eventually many of the government officials themselves, came to learn that the Burgos official communiqués (later these were given from the Salamanca station) could be depended upon to give, without exaggeration or understatement, trustworthy information on the military operations of the day. Up to the time I left Spain we had not been able to catch this official daily announcement in a single mistruth.

One correspondent took the pains to total the officially reported "successes" of the Loyalist government for the first eight months of the war. These "victories" claimed by the Madrid-Valencia government gave Loyalist forces "gains" of 1,500,000 square kilometers, or about three times the total surface area of Spain. The Loyalists claimed to have killed or wounded some 2,500,000 of the enemy (about six times the total General Franco is estimated to have under arms); to have taken 350,000 prisoners, to have shot down 56,779 enemy planes, and to have captured 415,000 cannon and 775,000 machine-guns.

Summing up the official announcements he found that the Loyalists had "captured" or were "on the verge of capturing" Huesca twenty-six times, Toledo eleven times and Oviedo twenty-two times. Cordoba, Teruel, Talavera and Avila similarly had been reported "taken" innumerable times, but up to the time the summary was made, not a single positive gain had been made by the Loyalists.

So certain was the foreign press corps that Madrid was

on the verge of capture that, at a dinner for the corps the first week of November, it set up a pool on the date Franco's troops would enter. Eighteen of the nineteen present wagered it would be within five weeks. The nineteenth, Jan Yindrich, laughingly explaining why his guess was "never," said:

"I don't doubt but that you fellows are right, but I just wanted to be different."

A diplomat held the stakes, and I have since wondered if that nineteenth bettor has been paid off. I myself lost a bet of 1,000 pesetas—given at 2-1 odds—on the question of Madrid's falling. Morris Greenspan, the young American correspondent of the *Daily Worker* with whom I made the bet, staged a dinner party for the press corps with part of his winnings.

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## CHAPTER XI

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### Aspects of the Socialization Venture

THE OUTBREAK OF THE WAR MARKED THE VIRTUAL DISAPPEARANCE of private ownership in Loyalist Spain. Fortunately for many of the proprietors of industrial and commercial enterprises and owners of apartment buildings and estates, the struggle was launched during the hot summer months when nearly every Spaniard who can afford it hies to San Sebastian, Estoril (Portugal) or Biarritz. Those who were abroad were safe. Many of those lolling at San Sebastian succeeded in fleeing across the Franco-Spanish border. Those who remained in Madrid, Valencia or Barcelona, either succeeded in bribing their way across some frontier, found refuge in some foreign legation, or "disappeared."

Even before the war a number of industries had been taken over by the workers, and many of the landed estates had been seized. Those that remained came into the socialization scheme before the war was a week old. Communist, Anarchist and Socialist appropriating committees raced each other to the choicest properties, the most luxurious homes, the most profitable industries. The first one to arrive posted a printed announcement: "Incautado por la C.N.T." or "Esta Casa ha sido Incautada por la U.G.T.," (if the anarcho-syndicalists or socialists won the race) or "Controlado por el Partido Comunista," if the Communists had won.

Rents were reduced by one-half. Private indebtedness, such as personal loans and unpaid balances on merchandise, was cancelled or subjected to indefinite moratorium. Pawned household articles and wearing apparel were released without payment of premiums. In many sections script became legal tender for foodstuffs and clothing. Some of this "money" was simply bits of paper with the negotiable value written on them by hand or typewriter, and the rubber stamp of the "Comité" in the lower left hand corner. Other newly created "money" was printed by job press and still other currency notes were made from engraved plates. Among my war souvenirs are a collection of 1, 2, 5, 10 and 25 peseta war currency from Cabeza del Buey and specimens of the 2½, 5 and 10 peseta Catalonian currency. The Catalonians printed 20,000,000 pesetas' worth of war currency and made its acceptance obligatory in any of the four Catalonian provinces, but no one outside these provinces would accept it.

The government's war chest consisted of \$700,000,000 worth of gold pesetas (the world's fourth largest gold reserve), an unestimated quantity of silver which it recalled in favor of five- and ten-peseta notes printed in 1935 but not circulated before the war, and confiscated cash and negotiable securities estimated by foreign bankers in Madrid and Valencia to reach \$300,000,000. Banks were forced to turn over records of all private accounts of Spaniards. These funds went into the war fund. Safe-deposit vaults were drilled open and cash and valuables removed. According to government announcements about 100,000,000 pesetas in cash and securities were secured from safe-deposit boxes of religious orders in Madrid. Other large sums were found by raiding parties exploring walls and floorings of convents and monasteries.

Only those foreign-owned enterprises which were incor-

porated under Spanish law were brought into the socialization scheme. Inasmuch as most foreign business in Spain had been thus incorporated because of the great difference in tax assessment, few of the foreign-owned industrial and commercial enterprises escaped socialization. One of the largest, if not the largest, foreign-controlled industry in Loyalist Spain is the telephone company. It was placed under the active direction of workers' committees whose chief characteristics, according to the American officials relegated to the status of supernumeraries, were ineptness and insolence. The American in charge of the Barcelona exchange left hurriedly when, according to the version he gave me later, the chief of the committee threatened to "cut his heart out" if he remained.

Incidentally, there was such a fall-off in revenues under the new management that the Central Committee of the telephone workers, deciding on drastic action, threatened to employ "the treatment accorded counter-revolutionaries" against those lax in payment or wishing to cancel their service.

A telephone official showed me a form letter which had been passed on to him by an irate subscriber and I made a copy of it. It read:

Dear Comrade:

In checking over our paid-up accounts we do not find your name although our collectors have visited your home twice and we have telephoned you various times recommending payment.

As a last resort we have had to disconnect your phone. However, it not being possible under the present circumstances to permit cancellations of service by subscribers without the most perfect justification, such action being capable of interpretation as a move to obstruct the progress of the revolution, *we*

*invite you to come to this office within forty-eight hours to pay your bill and continue among our subscribers. (Sic)*

In the event this advice is not followed we shall see ourselves obliged, although it would grieve us deeply, to resort to those extreme measures which present circumstances make advisable for protection of such an important public service as the telephone. These measures to which we refer have been given publicity in the daily press accounts of treatment accorded counter-revolutionaries.

Assured that it will receive the cooperation which the present situation calls for, the Central Committee of Workers of the Telephone Company salutes you.

Needless to say, this letter of "persuasion" had the desired effect of "jacking-up" delinquents and making them hurry to the company offices with full payment. Those who for economic or other reasons had decided to discontinue their telephone service hurriedly changed their minds.

The American officials of the telephone company, wishing to maintain a strictly neutral position in the war, objected strenuously to the government's placing of an artillery observation post on the top floor of the Madrid exchange. The objection availed them nothing. The post was removed only after several well-placed shots from enemy artillery made the top floor an uncomfortable place to be. Thirteen hundred women and children refugees were given shelter in the basement and sub-basement of the building. The telephone company fed them at its own expense. This was the safest place in Madrid and the refugees were quite happy until the government militia ordered them out and used the two cellars as munitions depots. A huge electric cross was placed on the telephone tower as a night land-mark for Loyalist aviators flying from the Alcalá de Henares airdrome, but was hastily removed

when the Loyalists found that the Rebel, as well as Loyalist pilots, were orienting themselves by it. The Standard Electric Company, an affiliate of the telephone company which manufactured telephone appliances, was converted into a war industry.

It is news when the rent collector refuses to collect. That was exactly what happened in Madrid during the long wrangling between the government and the "*Comités de Incautación*" of the C.N.T. and U.G.T. for the right to the income from appropriated properties. The committees insisted that the rents should be paid to their collectors. The government ordered that only government agents were entitled to collect. This placed the building superintendents, who customarily collected the rents and handed them over to the owner of the building, in a quandary. They did not want to incur the anger of the government and neither did they want to risk the reprisals threatened by the labor unions should the money go to anyone but themselves. The simplest way out was not to collect at all until the controversy had been settled.

My rent was already overdue four months when I was transferred to Valencia. I wanted to pay up before leaving, but the superintendent of the building refused to accept the money.

"If I have the money on hand and the anarchists who have appropriated this house find it out, they will make me give it to them," he said. "And if I do that and the government finds it out, I will be arrested. Let the rent go until I advise you how this argument comes out."

A month later he wrote me: "Send your check as soon as you can. The C.N.T. has won the argument and wants the money immediately. If they don't get it, I'm afraid that not even the American consulate seal on your door will save your furniture from being confiscated."



I sent the money. Afterwards I regretted it because when I left Spain I had to leave the furniture behind, anyway. There was no way to get it out of Madrid. Needless to say, no one in Madrid is buying furniture these days.

Strangely enough, many of the shops, stores and cafés, and a considerable number of hotels have continued to operate despite the harrowing conditions in Madrid under siege. Long strips of glued paper, criss-crossed over the windows, failed to keep them from shattering under the terrific impact of high explosive shells and monster bombs. Sand-bag protection was erected in front of many of the stores and shops and what merchandise remains is being sold.

The cafés had long since run out of coffee and sugar when I left Madrid, but it still was possible to buy beer and occasionally there was a *bocadillo*—a bun-like sandwich with a scrap of dried ham. When there was no ham we ate the bread dry, or with a bit of rancid butter. The last coffee we had, tasted like barley. It was served with little saccharine pills instead of sugar. We drank it black because the milk was being saved for the hospitals. Pepe, the waiter who used to bring me coffee and milk from a nearby café during office hours, was arrested when a militiaman found him smuggling me a couple of spoonfuls of watery milk in a pop bottle.

The German and Italian-owned shops and stores, of course, were all closed. Feeling ran high against these two nationalities from the beginning of the war and became so intense after the German and Italian recognition of Franco's government that it was not safe for any Italian or German subject to appear on the streets.

We missed the two German restaurants in Jardines street. They had served good food at decent prices and were

patronized by most members of the American and English colonies. We also missed the ice-cream which a chain of Italian places, opened a short time before the war, had introduced in Madrid for the first time. There had been ices, but no ice cream. The Madrileños had patronized the new enterprise in droves.

Chicote's bar was now a militia-controlled pleasure spot. Pedro Chicote, Madrid's best known bartender, was in St. Jean de Luz when the war broke and showed no disposition to return. He had catered to the wealthier classes, and the Primo de Riveras had been among his best customers.

"Meyers'," the most exclusive cabaret in Madrid, and the only one besides Casa Blanca in which women of the street were not allowed, was another unfortunate investment of early pre-war days. Its German owner, co-owner of the exclusive tea-room Bakanik, closed up and took refuge in the German embassy. When the embassy was closed he either succeeded in gaining admittance to some other embassy or in leaving the country. I had no news of him.

The owner of La Taberna, an excellent eating place next door to the Bakanik, was unfortunate enough to be a second cousin of the Primo de Rivera family. He was shot. So was the manager of the French hot-spot, Pidoux, on the Gran Via. The only war-time cabarets left open in Madrid were a few cellar establishments patronized by militiamen on leave.

Seven hundred of the Madrid barbers were drafted into service. Those remaining did a rushing business. It is an interesting experience to have a barber shave you during a bombardment. Several times when the razor was at my neck I have wondered idly whether the barber's arm would jerk up, or down, if a shell landed in the street in front.

One-man and two-men establishments did not come under the socialization scheme. Owners of such stores and shops dared not close even if they wanted to. To have done so would have branded them immediately as an enemy of the people who needed their wares.

The only Spaniard I knew who closed up his shop without selling out his stock was a certain Manolo, owner of a store selling religious articles just off the Calle Mayor. Manolo went into hiding at the outbreak of the war. When I last saw him he had secured forged identity papers and was desperately trying to join the Red Cross in the hope that he might find safety there. Militiamen had broken down the iron *cierre* of Manolo's shop, piled the statues, altar linens and crucifixes in the street, and made a bonfire of them.

Although electrical appliances, stoves and radiators particularly, were forbidden because they consumed too much of Madrid's electric power, they were on display in all the electric appliance shops and enjoyed a good sale when the chill of winter settled on the besieged capital. Amateur electricians made small electric plates from home-made coils and pieces of old tin and sold them at high prices when the supply of factory-made plates was exhausted. All business was strictly "cash and carry." Credit was extended to no one. I saw a small electric radiator in a shop on the Gran Via. Thinking it might keep the chill from at least one of the rooms of my unheated apartment, I asked that it be sent on approval. I was not certain that it could be operated on the current at my house, I explained to the owner-salesman. If it could, I would pay the delivery man.

"I have no delivery man, and it is impossible for me to let anything out of the store without payment," he told me. He added, with a sad sort of smile, that he didn't know

whether he would be able to refund my money if the fixture didn't work—"I am living from hand to mouth and my sales are few," he said. I decided not to take it.

Owners of little stores were at the mercy of unscrupulous militiamen. A haberdasher told me that three militiamen had been fitted for sweaters and trench-coats, and then walked out singing merrily "U.H.P." Another group went into a delicatessen store, ordered arm-loads of provisions and several bottles of wine, and then refused to pay. When the shop-owner followed them to the door, protesting, they told him he would be shot if he continued to the sidewalk. Luggage and jewelry shops fared likewise.

But most of the militiamen had plenty of money and spent it extravagantly.

An odd conception of socialization was instituted in the hotels and other large establishments. The employees had taken over, and, to carry out the idea of "We're all equal now," the same salaries were paid to all alike. Clerks are paid the same as the managers in the hotels. The chambermaids and bell-boys receive the same salaries as the clerks. Experience and ability count for nothing under this plan.

Moreover, no employee, no matter how incompetent, may be discharged. If he is called to service at the front, his salary, if he be employed by a private individual, goes on. If he be employed by one of the workers' syndicates, the government pays him while he is on duty. We had to continue the salary of our office boy, Inocente Pérez, despite the fact that he went to war at its outset and received his ten pesetas a day as militiaman.

There is little or no responsibility of any kind on the part of any employer. If one takes an automobile to a garage to be repaired, for instance, no one can give him any assurance when the work will be done, and if it is done

improperly, it is useless to complain. Nor is there any responsibility in cases of dishonesty.

A set of maps and some tools disappeared from the car of American military attaché Colonel Stephen Fuqua while it was in a public garage. He complained to the man one of the mechanics pointed out as the foreman.

"Was your car locked?" the foreman inquired, when Colonel Fuqua told him what had happened.

"No, but it was in a locked stall in your garage. Someone apparently has a duplicate key to the stall."

"I am sorry, *señor*, but I cannot suggest to these men that one of them has been dishonest."

Care is taken to pay the army, particularly the members of the International Brigades, on the spot. A young militiaman I knew quite well was one of the "runners" who carried the weekly payroll from Valencia to Madrid. He astounded me by the carelessness with which he handled large sums of money. One afternoon he stopped by my house for a drink, leaving 1,500,000 pesetas in two suitcases in his unlocked automobile parked at the curb.

The foreign aviators generally have their pay deposited in a foreign bank. The Spanish embassy in Paris acted as the paymaster for several American pilots I knew. The girl friend of one young American pilot who signed up in Mexico and who carried a Spanish passport under the name of "Diaz," told me that "Diaz'" monthly salary of \$1,500 was paid her like clock-work by the embassy in Paris, and that she had succeeded in banking most of it.

"If —— has no bad luck, in a few more months we'll have enough to last us for a long time," she said. I later read accounts of ——'s capture by the Insurgents.

I knew Bert Acosta, Freddy Lord, Eddie Semons, Eddie Schneider, Gordon Barry and several other of the American pilots at Valencia. They were a jolly, care-free crowd,

and made no secret of the fact that they had signed up only because of the attractive financial offers. They had no political interest in the war. Some of the French pilots I knew claimed to be making as high as \$5,000 a month, but most of the foreign flyers received the same salary as "Diaz." In addition to their monthly pay, they were offered a bonus of \$1,000 for every Insurgent plane they shot down. The government paid the premiums on insurance against their injury or death. A young Australian pilot received (he told me) \$10,000 after he had been permanently crippled in an aerial dog-fight. An English flyer whose right arm was partially paralyzed by a bullet claimed he had been given half that sum.

The automobile industry was one of those to suffer most heavily during the war. Most of the sales agencies had incorporated under Spanish law and their entire stocks were confiscated. Albert McLean, Buick dealer in Madrid, protested bitterly but vainly when the militia confiscated sixty-two new cars from his showroom and warehouse.

"This will ruin me," he said, and the militiamen replied:

"Come back after the war and you'll get rich selling cars."

In truth, Spain ought to be a good market for automobiles after the war. All privately owned automobiles were confiscated and the treatment they were given by the militia soon placed most of them on the junk pile. On a motor trip to Valencia in November, my travelling companions, Margaret Palmer, American representative of Carnegie Institute in Spain for many years, and Roger Smith, assistant manager of the International Banking Corporation of Madrid and Barcelona (affiliated with the National City Bank of New York), amused themselves by counting wrecked automobiles, passenger cars and trucks,

abandoned along the highway. They counted thirty-seven before darkness fell, and Smith remarked:

"This will be a great place for automobile salesmen after the war—if there is any money left to buy automobiles."

Miss Palmer said:

"Because they are requisitioned cars, the militiamen don't bother to have them repaired after an accident. It is easier to leave them and take out a fresh one."

Only the newest and flashiest models were used by the militia. The older cars—those which had seen two or three years of service, were put under guard in open parking lots. I have seen thousands of these automobiles gradually becoming so much junk after months of exposure to rain and sun and snow.

Spaniards owning automobiles were only too eager to lend them to foreigners when the confiscation was announced. They were anxious to see them under the protection of foreign flags. Several car owners pressed us to accept their cars for the duration of the war. Because there were few means of transportation, we accepted two—a Dodge and a Graham-Paige—on the condition we would not be responsible for them should they be damaged or destroyed. "Use them as you will," their owners told us. "No matter how you handle them they will be better treated than if they should fall into the hands of the militia." Many of the correspondents drove automobiles acquired in the same manner.

While the war was young, the safe-deposit vaults of the foreign-controlled banks were respected. Eventually the boxes rented by wealthy Spaniards in these banks were opened and denuded as had been those of the Spanish banks long before. One of the most beautiful collections of coins I have ever seen, and one which surely would thrill any expert in numismatics much more than it did me, was

brought to light by a squad raiding the safe-deposit boxes of the Anglo-South American Bank in Valencia. Experts were drilling the doors of the boxes when I happened in the bank, and I was invited to go down into the vault and watch the operations. Although I know nothing about numismatics, I got a real "kick" out of the sight that greeted my eyes when one of the boxes was drilled open.

Dozens of rare gold coins, some tissue-paper thin and others quite large, some of recent coinage but the majority dating back to the Roman conquest, were spread out on a table in front of the gaping vaults. They had been carefully wrapped in silk, and even the raiders gaped as the silk was unfolded. The intrinsic value of the metal alone was estimated by the bankers at many thousands of dollars. From a collector's viewpoint, the heap was priceless.

There were strings of pearls and stacks of precious gems, taken from other boxes, stacked high on the long table, but that collection of coins, shining there in dull splendor under the vault's incandescence, somehow made all the rest seem like baubles on a notions counter.

Little objection to the confiscation of the excess wealth of the former nobility and great landowners was to be heard in any quarter. There was a general feeling that it was not just that a few have more than they could possibly use, while desperate poverty saddled thousands. Nor was there much criticism, even in the more conservative circles, of the seizure of the great estates. Even during the Rightist era of power the Agrarian Reform program, launched by the first Azana administration, had gone forward. Under this program hundreds of thousands of acres were to be parceled among the peasants, and facilities were to be afforded them to improve the land. Most of the arable land in Spain needs irrigation.

It was generally recognized that a redistribution of



wealth was necessary if Spain was to take its place among the great nations of the world. The criticism I heard was principally directed against the violence which accompanied the socialization plan under the new revolutionary system. Deprive a man of his surplus wealth, yes. But of his life, no.

The activities of the Extremists throughout the length and breadth of the Loyalist territory were producing a dangerous unrest. The Anarcho-Syndicalists, refusing to heed the pleas of the other Popular Front parties to postpone the social revolution until after the war, were applying it forcibly on a scale wider than even the Marxists envisioned. The small as well as the large landowners, the petty bourgeoisie as well as the extremely wealthy, were included in their plan. I talked to scores of small business men and independent farmers and they all told me the same story. The demands made upon them either had already ruined them completely or were in the process of doing so.

The owner of a small glass shop where I called to have a broken headlight lens replaced told me:

"I have employed three men, paying them ten pesetas each. We just managed to get along. Then the C.N.T. ordered me to put on three more men and pay all six a minimum of fifteen pesetas daily. I told the enforcers who came here with guns that this was impossible, that there was not enough work here for the four of us.

"But they told me they had decided this shop must have at least six helpers, and they became ugly. So I proposed:

" 'Well, then, let's do this. I will give the men my shop and I will become an employee here, getting the same salary. I have not been making fifteen pesetas a day profit out of this place.'

"But they told me I could not do this—that I must continue as the employer and that it would be up to me to

find the money to pay the men. They sent three more men—there they are back there playing cards. There is nothing for them to do.

"I have no money saved—times have been bad—and I don't know what will happen when Saturday comes and there is no money to pay the men."

My tailor, Antonio Collado, patronized by many of the Madrid foreign colony because of his excellent workmanship and reasonable prices, shook his head when I went to order a suit.

"Don't have a suit made now," he advised me. "I recommend that you wait. I am ashamed of the work being turned out in this shop—what there is of it—and refuse to put my label on it.

"We had work for six cutters here when business was good. The syndicate has forced me to increase this number to thirty, and few of the new ones they sent know anything about tailoring. I am continuing in business until we use up the material we have in stock and then I will close my shop until this war is over, or perhaps forever. I have no money to pay thirty men. If I am going to starve, I am going to do it in comfort, at home."

Valencians are famous for their foresight in providing against old age. Unlike Spaniards in many other regions of Spain who rely on their children to keep them when they are old, the Valencian lives frugally, always thinking of the day when he will not be able to earn. He saves his money until he has enough to buy a small patch of land. It is on this patch he spends his declining years, happy in the thought that he is a burden to no one. All these small farms came under the socialization plan of the Syndicalists, and the enforcement of their plan earned for them the bitter resentment and hatred of the vast Levante which is called "the granary of Spain."

An elderly woman giving me a manicure in a second floor shop facing the Plaza de Castelar said:

"You are a foreigner. An Englishman?"

"American," I told her.

"Ah, America! How wonderful it must be to live there. Security, contentment, a chance for everyone. How unlike Spain now!"

When I asked her what she meant, she said:

"I should not say this. It is dangerous to talk. But an American would not betray an old woman. My husband and I worked for twenty-five years until we had saved 40,000 pesetas (about \$5,000 at normal rate of exchange). We bought a little farm and built a little house. We had a cow, three donkeys, and some chickens. It was a little place but it was enough for us, now that our children are grown.

"The militia came to us a few weeks ago and told us they were taking our property—that it had been *incautado* (appropriated). We protested but it was no use. Last Sunday we had no meat so we went out to our place to see if we could get one of our chickens. A man with a rifle met us and ordered us off the place. There is no justice. We are both more than fifty. It will be hard to start life all over again now."

Everywhere I found it the same. Bakers, butchers, laundry owners, truck gardeners, café proprietors, haberdashers. They all said: "It is not just. This cannot continue." There is danger in that kind of talk.



Jose María Gil Robles, Rightist leader, shown with the author during the interview in which he revealed that his followers, dissatisfied with conditions under Popular Front rule, were formulating plans for a return to power. The interview was held in the Acción Popular headquarters in Madrid shortly before the outbreak of the war.



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## CHAPTER XII

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### Levante in Wartime

WHILE THE UNREST, FEAR AND UNCERTAINTY WERE MOUNTING, I was ordered by my New York office to go to Valencia to cover the activities of the transplanted Loyalist government. It had remained silent for some time after fleeing Madrid. Now that the danger of Madrid's capture seemed to have been forestalled, it again became articulate. We had a special staff man in Barcelona but he could not cover both Barcelona and Valencia. It is an overnight trip each way by train, and communiqués were being issued almost daily and sometimes two and three times a day.

What a difference between Madrid and Valencia in those days. Madrid, city of the dead after sundown: every resident except those on guard duty huddled in his home, trembling at what the night might bring. City of dread, of silence after dark, except when the artillery loosed its tongue or the soaring night raiders flew over and dropped their terrible bombs.

Here I was, in Valencia at 9 o'clock at night, and every street light and electric sign blazing. It had been long since I had seen any kind of street illumination except the dim glow of alternate *faroles* whose feeble rays, coming through glass thickly smeared with blue, to prevent them from being seen by air raiders, served only as landmarks as we stumbled through the inky blackness on our way to or from

the telephone company to transmit our night dispatches. Valencia's brilliantly lighted thoroughfares almost dazzled me.

I had often dreamed, during those fearful months of darkness in Madrid, that I was again walking down Broadway in New York and reveling in the glare of its millions of lights. It seemed, as I drove into Valencia that night, that my dream had come true.

There was much justification for the comment of new arrivals in Valencia at this time that the Levante capital "didn't seem to know there was a war going on." Like Barcelona, it had not yet been bombed from the air or attacked from the sea. Before I left Valencia it had become another city of the dead after dusk, with air raids and naval bombardments instilling the same fear that Madrid knew. But now an air of gaiety prevailed everywhere.

The cafés were full of militiamen on leave from the front or awaiting their first call to active service. Cabarets were crowded from opening hour early in the afternoon until long after midnight. The only *refugios*, air raid shelters, Valencia had at that time were the lower floors of the taller buildings, and each of the principal cabarets, occupying the ground floor or basement of a tall building, had been converted into a *refugio*.

Later, forty-three reinforced-concrete underground shelters were built in various parts of the capital, but before they were completed the patrons of the cabarets, chiefly militiamen, enjoyed a feeling of safety while they were being entertained. Could they have seen what good-sized bombs had done to even better constructed buildings in Madrid they would not have felt so safe.

Hotel accommodations were exhausted. New arrivals frequently had to spend their first few nights sleeping in a bathtub or on the floor of some hotel lobby. Thanks to

the efforts of American Vice-Consul Milton Wells, I had a bed to sleep in the first night. Not a bed exactly, but a couch, and there were no blankets. The accommodation was in the home of a young Britisher, employed at the Valencia branch of the Anglo-South American bank. He had already loaned out all the blankets he had save one for himself, but I didn't mind. Soaked to the skin by a heavy rain which I had welcomed on the way down from Madrid because it meant no planes would be harassing the highway, I lay down in my clothes and soon was fast asleep.

By day Valencia was even more gay than by night. Streets were filled with uniformed men and pretty girls. Automobiles loaded with pleasure-bound militiamen roared through narrow thoroughfares. Street hawkers shouted their wares. Blind musicians, most of whom I recognized as having come from Madrid, now played their accordions, hurdy-gurdies and violins along Valencia's streets.

Stores were jammed. One had to wait for a seat in a café. Restaurants were doing a flourishing business. The population of the Levante capital, ordinarily around 400,000, had been swelled to nearly 1,000,000 by the influx of refugees, many of whom were able-bodied Madrid men who had succeeded in escaping the besieged city under one pretext or another.

I frequently ran into some of the Madrileños who, despite earlier vehement declarations they would never leave Madrid, had found the Valencian climate much more salutory. Invariably they would sheepishly alibi their presence in Valencia: "Just down on business for a day or two and going right back to Madrid." But one saw them again and again as the days stretched into weeks and the weeks into months.

So many came down that the Valencian C.N.T. posted huge signs reading: "The women and children of Madrid



are welcome to our homes and our bread. But the Madrid men who come here as though on vacation, sporting fine clothes and driving big cars, are not welcome. Let them go back and defend their city."

The only indication that there WAS a war going on in Spain was a huge map of the nearest fighting zones in the Plaza de Castelar. In letters two feet high the warning was sounded: "Valencians, remember that the Teruel front is only 150 kilometers distant." This was before the Insurgent drive which considerably lessened that distance. After the first few bombardments, however, the air of gaiety in Valencia underwent a marked change. Many of the women who had been evacuated from Madrid realized that they were in more danger here than they were at home. Enemy planes from the Palma Mallorca base could fly over with a cargo of bombs, drop them, and return for more within a half hour. Enemy ships could stand off five or six miles from shore and spray the city with shells, and there was no "neutral zone" in Valencia such as the refugees had enjoyed in Madrid.

There are no subways in Valencia, as there are in Madrid and Barcelona. The houses are of flimsier construction. The shells and bombs went through them as though they were of tissue. Many of the women wanted to go back to Madrid where they had their men-folks and friends, but the government would issue no safe-conducts. After several terrific bombardments from sea and air the Loyalist press set up a clamor.

"The government has repeatedly said that our navy and air force are superior to those of the enemy," it said, in substance. "Why, then, are these attacks not prevented or punished with reprisals?"

Socialist deputy Alonso, in a printed reply in one of the Loyalist-inspired organs, silenced this clamor with an ex-

planation that the Loyalist navy "was not yet ready to pit itself against the Franco fleet." "*No queremos ser pasta*. We don't want to be crushed into jelly. It would be foolish to risk losing ships now. The time will come when the Loyalist fleet will sweep the seas clear of these new pirates of the Mediterranean."

It was a frank admission of the Loyalist navy's fear of the Insurgent sea forces. A practical demonstration of the reluctance of the Loyalist fleet to engage in a naval battle with the Franco navy was given during the siege of Malaga. The battleship Jaime I and five destroyers were sent from Cartagena against the Rebel warships bombarding Malaga. Next day they returned, their commander explaining that they had "deployed around two ships they met half way until their fuel was exhausted and they were forced to abandon the trip!"

As in Madrid and Barcelona, the Russian influence was apparent everywhere in Valencia.

Posters announcing Communist organization meetings were plastered on buildings and fences; oleos of Stalin, Lenin and Marx and bronze lapel-pins fashioned in the shape of a hammer and sickle were on sale at every street corner; Marxist literature predominated at the book stalls; the only motion pictures were Russian propaganda films; sound trucks blared forth an unceasing stream of Communist propaganda in the plazas, and the Red flag vied with the Anarchist Black-and-Red banners on public buildings. As in Madrid and Barcelona, streets had been renamed to conform to Marxist ideals. Directions were often difficult to find because the residents had not yet become accustomed to the new system of nomenclature. Saints' names, by which most streets in Spain are known, and names of former prominent conservative political leaders, were removed. The new names included Via Russia, Paseo

de Lenin, Avenida de la Pasionaria (The Passion Flower, Dolores Ibarruri, Asturian Communist leader), Plaza Rojo (Red Square), Avenida Thaelman, Avenida Libertarian and other names associated with the revolutionary theme.

The street on which I lived in Madrid had been named after the great political leader Antonio Maura. Its new name was rather unwieldy. "Avenue of the Executive Anti-Fascist Committee" it was called. The Cerro de los Angeles—geographical center of Spain—was called Red Hill after its capture by the Loyalists but when the Rebels recaptured it it again became the Hill of the Angels.

Here in Valencia, as in other parts of Loyalist Spain, the wearing of hats was supposed to be an indication of Fascist sympathies and everyone not having a militiaman's cap went bare-headed. For awhile, I was told, militamen shot at anyone wearing a hat. White shirts and any kind of necktie also were eschewed as being Fascist, which accounts for the generally shabby appearance of the civilians seen on the streets. One had to watch his hands closely. The closed fist was used by traffic police, where there were traffic police; by the army as its official salute, and by automobile drivers to indicate turns. To extend a palm in a moment of forgetfulness was extremely dangerous. Babies in arms were taught to clench their tiny fists.

Christmas, 1936, was a different kind of Christmas than the residents of the territory now designated as Loyalist Spain had ever known. Blighted by the deaths of countless thousands since the bloody struggle had begun the previous July, there was little heart for merriment in the war-weary people.

For the first time in living recollection the day was not ushered in in traditional Spanish fashion with the Misa del Gallo—Mass of the Rooster, which is what the Spaniards call their Midnight Mass. The churches and cathedrals, which each Christmas Eve had been filled to overflowing,

this Christmas Eve stood stark and silent against the moonlit sky. Gutted by fire and shorn of the priceless art treasures which were their heritage of centuries, the ruined buildings stood like giant, blackened skeletons. Those few which had been stripped but not destroyed had been converted into barracks, and the snores of sleeping militiamen substituted the organs' *Gloria in Excelsis Deo*.

Christmas Day's customary feast was a sad affair. In most places it was rice and lentils again for the five-hundredth time. Those fortunate enough to have friends among the militia's provisioning committees or sufficient money to afford the rising prices of what foodstuffs remained in open market, fared somewhat better.

January 6th, traditional "Day of Kings" set aside for the distribution of presents, was not called by that name this year. The Anarchists protested against observance of the tradition on the grounds that it was a throw-back to the days of religious symbolism, but custom overruled them. Presents, chiefly toy military outfits and clothing, were bought for the children. Loyalist composers found an opportunity to help the new educational program by creating verses with a revolutionary theme. These verses were printed into booklets and distributed among war orphans by the Ministry of Propaganda as gifts from the new "Proletarian Kings of Labor, Fraternity and Progress."

Fifteen Americans in Valencia had a good Christmas dinner, thanks to Colonel Fuqua of the American embassy. The colonel scouted the countryside and somehow found a turkey. Imported "trimmings" and clever little presents for all his guests made his annual joint birthday-Christmas spread a much enjoyed event for us this year. The dinner was laid in the country home of a Spanish friend of mine, who, fearing it would be confiscated, was glad to let us use it rent-free in exchange for our placing an American flag over the door.

## How the Loyalist Propaganda Machine Operates

AS THE CENSORSHIP DEVELOPED FROM A RICKETY WEAKLING to a lusty youngster, the government ventured into the field of propaganda.

Prior to the war there had been no propaganda machine in Spain. Most of the other countries of Europe, particularly those governed by dictatorships, had long since set up elaborate and effective machinery for this purpose, but up to this time Spain did not even have an effective system for promotion of tourism.

Within a few short weeks after the war had begun Loyalist Spain had a propaganda machine equal or superior to that possessed by any of her European neighbors. Money was no object, and the best points of many systems were incorporated in the Spanish fabrication. Crews of foreign experts were imported and the machinery got under way. Slowly and cautiously at first, but soon it was going at top speed.

Typewriters, mimeographing machines and printing presses began the laborious task of moulding public opinion abroad and at home. The domestic job was simple, consisting principally in devising ways to strengthen morale, but the other was most difficult. Loyalist Spain was in an unfavorable light in many foreign countries because of the long series of violent and ruthless acts

which had preceded the war and the merciless "liquidations" of non-combatants which followed it. It was the job of the propagandists to bring about a change in world opinion, particularly in those countries from which Loyalist Spain wanted material or moral assistance. The United States was a primary objective, and one had only to watch the American newspapers to see how successful the campaign was.

The physical set-up of the new Spanish machine is as simple as it is effective. A cabinet portfolio, frankly labeled "Ministry of Propaganda," was created. Under its direction all domestic and foreign propaganda is centered. Reams of copy, every word of which is carefully weighed for its possible effect, are turned out by alternate crews of trained writers. A corps of clever artists turns out decorative posters, each carrying its special message. Photographers hurry in and out of the government dark-rooms in the *Seccion de la Prensa Extranjera*, and printing presses whirl night and day, sending out streams of leaflets and pamphlets.

Mailing clerks work at long tables wrapping into packages the written, drawn and photographic propaganda destined for use abroad. It is sent to every corner of the world. Charles W. Smith, editor of the Evening Star at Peoria, Ill., receives these packages two and three times a week just as do the editors of the big metropolitan dailies in New York, Paris and London.

Of course the propaganda directors do not expect all they send out to be used. If only a small fraction of the total reaches publication, they are quite satisfied. And while they are handling the work in Valencia, government-subsidized news agencies abroad, like the Agence Espagne in Paris, help in the creation and dissemination of

inspired "news" reports when the element of time is important.

Men and women employed at the Valencia fountain-head of the propaganda stream cull through mountains of newspapers, carefully indexing and filing clippings of the published propaganda. These are used as gauges of the capacity of foreign newspapers and news publications to absorb the product of the propaganda ministry. Those newspapers not received by the ministry are checked by the various legations abroad and articles of interest are forwarded.

News dispatches similarly are clipped and filed. The correspondent who smuggles an unfavorable story out of Loyalist Spain has little hope of keeping under cover very long no matter how clever he may be in protecting himself. But I have discussed that more fully in another place in this book.

The first effort made to employ this hitherto untried weapon was a rather crude stunt staged for the purpose of counteracting the deluge of unfavorable publicity attending the Loyalist "liquidation." The French correspondent who invented the legend of the Badajoz bullring massacre, a story which had been picked up by other correspondents and published the world over before English investigators proclaimed it a hoax, unwittingly inspired the new venture.

This first venture was a sequel to the famous World War atrocity story, now generally discredited, which reported the crucifixion by the Germans of a Canadian soldier to a barn door. Correspondents were invited to come to the Madrid morgue and see the "quartered body of a Loyalist airman who had been captured and barbarously tortured by the enemy." The body had been "packed in a box and dropped behind Loyalist lines by a parachute," the invitation said, as a "warning of the fate which awaited

all captured Loyalist pilots." The stunt was but half successful. The gruesome spectacle nauseated the correspondents who accepted the invitation but failed to convince most of them. The thing had been overdone. Blood had even been smeared on the parachute. Some of the correspondents used the story but qualified it heavily to protect themselves. Later the box was traced to a Madrid department store. The dismembered body was identified as that of a Spanish workman killed near Madrid during a bombardment.

Other propaganda stunts employed to attract attention away from Loyalist excesses included the circulation of a report that Franco had announced by radio that his pilots had been instructed to seek out and bomb hospitals.

"The bombing of a hospital is better for our cause than a victory in the field," Franco was alleged to have declared.

Similar to the hate-provoking story circulated just before the civil war that nuns were killing children by feeding them poisoned candy, this bit of propaganda was more effective in Spain than abroad. In the case of the nuns, the *bulo* resulted in the beating to death of two of them walking in the Cuatro Caminos section of Madrid, and undoubtedly contributed to the intense hatred displayed during the massacre of the religious following the outbreak of the war. Rebel prisoners were the ones to suffer the effects of the announcement that hospitals were to be singled out by Franco's bombers. Any disposition the Loyalists might have had to show mercy toward wounded prisoners now disappeared in the wave of fury the announcement produced.

Stories of atrocities attributed to the Moors so inflamed the Loyalist fighting forces that short shrift was made of Moorish prisoners falling into their hands. The intense hatred maintained by these stories was in strange contrast



to the note sounded in the pleas broadcast by loudspeakers across no-man's-land and printed on leaflets dropped by planes over Spanish Morocco:

"We are your real, your true friends—not the hordes of Franco. We know you are fighting on his side only because your officers force you to do so. Kill your officers and come to our side where you will be welcomed as brothers."

The extreme sensitiveness of the Spaniard to any suggestion that his homeland may be taken from him gave the political commissars an effective weapon. Stories to the effect that in the event of a Franco victory Spain would become a "German colony," and that Balearic Islands had already been promised Italy in return for her assistance to the enemy, never failed to arouse the Loyalist forces to new heights of fighting rage.

Most of the propaganda, however, was created for foreign consumption. Its effectiveness was remarkable. Within a short time the press of the world had forgotten the Loyalist excesses. What had at first been freely termed a "Red government" became, through the influence of skillful propaganda, a "Democratic government" fighting to maintain "democracy" against "hordes of invaders." The foreign assistance Loyalist Spain was receiving was successfully minimized while that given the enemy assumed staggering proportions. The enemy planes, always manned by foreign pilots, always killed "mostly women and children," while the Loyalist planes never dropped bombs on anything but "military objectives." Franco's attacks were always carried out against "open, defenseless civilian populations" such as Madrid, Cartagena, Valencia and Barcelona, although military observers had long since termed these cities as "fortified objectives" in their official reports.

The martyrdom of the people of these cities has re-

ceived the frequent commendation it deserved. But what about the inhabitants of Oviedo, Zaragoza, Huesca, Salamanca, Granada and Sevilla? The Loyalists sent from 500 to 3,000 shells into Oviedo every day for months on end, and 100,000 tons of bombs were dropped on Huesca and Zaragoza, but one scarcely knows from newspaper accounts that these cities, too, have been under siege.

One of the greatest feats that the Loyalist propaganda machine achieved, however, was the changing of world opinion on the government's attitude toward religion. The necessity of overcoming the unsavory impression created by the wave of church burnings and priest killings was recognized early in the war, and those who shape the government's propaganda policies began a careful campaign. It seemed difficult, after the publicity which had been given the excesses, but the fact that the Basques were principally Catholic and allied with the Loyalists in the interests of their autonomy gave an opening wedge.

Although it would have been instant suicide for a man or woman to appear in religious garb in Madrid, Valencia or Barcelona, the religious freedom enjoyed by the Basques was represented as typical of all the Loyalist-controlled area. Stories to the effect that the government "planned to permit the re-opening of churches in the near future" still are being given wide publication although, as everyone in Loyalist Spain knows, all but a few churches were burned and wrecked and it is doubtful if a half dozen priests of the thousands who once lived in Madrid, Barcelona and Valencia still are alive. If they are, it is because they have remained effectively concealed. Those churches which were only partly destroyed by the incendiaries were converted into barracks and munitions dumps. When a Rebel bomb hits one of these, a new Insurgent "atrocitiy" is announced to the world.

The bombing of the Basque town of Guernica was one of the most fortunate bits of material for the propaganda machine. Guernica had an arms factory. It was used as a Loyalist military base, and it was in the path of Franco's march on Bilbao. But the government propaganda workers exploited the fact that Guernica had a venerated oak-tree in a central plaza. The bombardment became "an atrocious attack on the defenseless, holy city of the Basques." It aroused such a wave of indignation abroad that not even the joint statement of disinterested correspondents, testifying that the principal damage had been caused by Anarchist incendiaries and Asturian dynamiters before they evacuated Guernica, carried much weight.

Occasionally delegations of Protestant clergymen came to Loyalist Spain to investigate stories they had read of anti-clerical activities. These delegations were warmly received. Great pains were taken to show them that they had been grievously misled. Special guides were selected to show the distinguished visitors around. Needless to say, the clergymen saw only what they were intended to see. After a day or two they generally were hustled off to the frontier, properly impressed. A State Department official told me of one such "conducted tour" which had not turned out so well, however. The visiting delegation had been shown here and there when their guide inadvertently led them past a bookstall. They paused to admire some rare old volumes. The guide saw his mistake too late. They had seen one of the things he was instructed never to let visitors see. There, prominently displayed, were profusely illustrated copies of "*La Traca*" and "*Bicharracos Clericales*," widely distributed anti-clerical publications, their covers portraying priestly orgies with semi-naked nuns.

The delegation left in a huff.

A large bundle of material from the Ministry of Propa-

ganda was delivered to my Valencia office twice each day. I rarely used any of this material without checking it carefully. Sometimes it was impossible to check. One of the articles I did use typifies the high degree of skill the propaganda machine achieved within the space of a few short months. This was a story written by Millie Bennet, one of the talented young American writers on the government payroll, describing the evacuation of Malaga. My office had urgently requested coverage on the Malaga situation, but the government, denying there was any possibility of Malaga's falling, was not furnishing cars to correspondents to disprove its contention.

The story, written by the Ministry of Propaganda employee, a gifted young woman fresh from seven years' training in Russia, was a "ghosted interview" quoting Dr. Norman Bethune, Canadian head of a blood-transfusion unit working in Loyalist Spain, on the experiences she attributed to him among the refugees fleeing Malaga. Her well written "interview" told of the "inconceivable ferocity of the barbarian invaders," the "innumerable scenes of horror created by the foreigners" and the "terrible tragedy of these countless thousands forced to flee their homes." It did not mention, of course, that the ones who did the "forcing" were the Loyalists themselves. As happened later in Bilbao, many who did not want to leave were executed as "counter-revolutionaries." Even if it had mentioned this, I wouldn't have been able to send it.

I had no doubt but that there *was* much suffering among the hungry Malaguenans struggling eastward along the highway toward Almeria. I had seen something of the hardships undergone by the refugees in other parts of Spain. I had no way of getting there to cover the story myself, so I used this prepared article, trimming out some

of the more obvious propaganda with which the story was interlarded, but letting it run pretty full.

My only point in mentioning this incident is, as I have said, to show how well the Loyalist propaganda office now does its work. Shortly after I had sent this "interview" I received a cabled "bouquet" from my New York office, congratulating me on it!

The queer feeling I had upon receiving this message may be better understood if I add that, despite our months of hard and dangerous work at the fronts, and despite innumerable "scoops" won by painstakingly cultivating scores of contacts on the possibility of a sometime return on our investment of time and money, this was the first such message any of us in the Madrid bureau had received since the beginning of the war.

A noble reward for a hand-out! Of course my office had no way of knowing that it was a hand-out.

At first the official communiqués were issued only in Spanish. It was not long before the government began supplying English, French and German translations to correspondents representing newspapers printed in those languages.

We thought it was a considerate step taken for the convenience of the scribes inasmuch as few of them spoke Spanish. But one day we happened to compare the translations and found that each of them carried a slightly different meaning. Thereafter we compared them regularly and found that the translations were so skilfully made that they carried certain particular messages to the respective peoples destined to read them.

The French, for instance, would gain one impression from a communiqué, the English another, and the Germans still another. The differences were not those variations of idiom which are necessary in the making of readable trans-

lations from one language to another but were variations of actual fact. Sometimes the differences were small, but they were quite noticeable when we laid the various versions side by side.

The propaganda work of foreign Communists and others fighting with the Loyalist forces has done a great deal toward winning world sympathy for the Madrid-Valencia government. Each upon leaving Spain has become a goodwill ambassador. Some have found ways to help in the dissemination of propaganda even before they leave Spain.

The publicity-loving young flyer from the Oxford University group, John —, was a striking example. There is no need to mention John's last name. All the correspondents in Loyalist Spain knew him well. He provided us with not a small amount of entertainment. We first came to know John when he arrived in Madrid as one of a group of English pilots whose Communistic zeal prompted them to do what they could for the cause. Young—he was not more than 20 at the most—John had had some training as a student pilot in England. He was assigned to Getafe airport just south of Madrid where the government planes—a sad collection of worn out Nieuports and Potez at the beginning of the war—were based.

There was nothing of modesty in John. He was a flyer and he wanted to be sure everyone knew it. His flying suit, an elaborately customed affair presented by his fellow students at Oxford, had wings all over it. There were two on the chest, one on each shoulder, and another on each leg just above the knee. Silver braided wings that showed up well against the dark flying suit. His flying cap carried another set, and a pair of silver wings fashioned in pin style was worn over John's heart.

He immediately won the soubriquet of "Wings" and his fellow pilots referred to him as "the chap with so many

wings loaded on him he can hardly get off the ground in a single-motor plane."

John got wounded the second time up—a bit of shrapnel in the leg—and this brought him some publicity. The wound was not bad and the squadron commander believed a week or two at the most should see John back in service. The government was very short of flyers at that time. Even though John was not much of a help, the presence of another escort pursuit plane gave confidence to the bombers. But John had other ideas.

The flesh wound had, as John recounted for the benefit of café admirers the thrilling battle in which he had received it, gradually grown. It had become three wounds, and incendiary bullets, not shrapnel, had caused them. John had cultivated a fine limp by this time. He wrote his own story of the "battle" in which he had participated and sent it to some English labor papers which gave it great prominence. John modestly admitted he had shot down "at least two" enemy planes before the "dozens of others had got on his tail and overwhelmed him." This lasted for nearly three months, and John made two trips to England to give "lectures" during this time. He saved all the clippings telling about his exploits and would show them to you on the slightest provocation.

One day he blossomed out with a captain's insignia. No one knew just where he had acquired it. Those were days of astonishing promotions and we did not embarrass him by asking. He now referred to himself always as "Captain." Because he wore, in addition to a pistol, an elaborately chased Toledo poniard which his English admirers had given him, pilots and newspapermen sometimes called him "Admiral." John didn't seem to mind. He had acquired a crash helmet. With it swinging from one hand and a small

riding crop in the other, he continued his gay round of the cafés. If he had ever taken a plane up again after his first misadventure none of his fellow pilots knew about it, but that didn't stop the young Englishman from accounting ever new and ever more hazardous tales of prowess as part of the Loyalist air force.

But all this eventually palled on John. He hadn't had his name in print in weeks and his old café acquaintances didn't seem to have as much time to listen to him as before. He became nervous and irritable. He decided he would go down to Albacete, where the new batch of foreign pilots was being given war training. And he decided he would take along Margarita, a café girl who had proven one of his most sympathetic listeners. The night before they were to go, while John and Margarita were in the Miami bar discussing their plans, the Cheka came and took Margarita away for questioning. Her acquaintanceship with so many pilots and officers who frequented the Miami had put her under suspicion as a possible spy.

John fumed and raged as she was dragged from the divan beside him, but to no avail. We knew that Margarita would not be harmed. She had too many friends among the militia. But John was worried. He worried all that night, and even called us at the embassy to relay his fears. The next day, John's imagination having played him false, he worked himself into such a state that he became violently hysterical. He came into the censorship offices in the telephone building with a strange, far away look in his eyes. Suddenly shouting at the top of his lungs: "Pools of blood! Pools of blood!" he fell, writhing, to the floor.

All efforts to calm him proved useless. Moaning and sobbing, he lay on the floor.

"I saw them do it!" he screamed. "They killed her—



killed her right before my eyes! Margarita, my poor Margarita! There she lay, her blonde hair all blood. Blood! Great pools of blood!"

Four husky assault-guards led him away. It was only after two weeks in the quiet of a sanitarium that his serenity was restored. Then he again resumed his old haunts, pathetically seeking new listeners. He seemed to have forgotten all about Margarita. But new listeners were few. John felt he was not appreciated. He went down to Valencia, where I had been assigned to cover the activities of the transplanted government. John one day brought to the censor's offices what he termed "the outline of a fine story," a story, or rather two stories, which he apparently believed would restore him to his former place in the public eye. Acting as his own publicity agent, John had conceived the idea of his own "capture" and "escape." On a single sheet of paper he had typed, for our convenience, data which he felt should be included in the two "releases."

The first half of the page, which I have kept as a souvenir of the war, was marked: "For use December 18th."

It read:

Captain John — captured by Fascists.

Was returning to England for Christmas.

Student of Liverpool and Oxford Universities.

First airman to be wounded in the revolution.

Left Madrid hospital against doctor's orders to address meeting in London.

In October left studies and threw up career to fight in Spain.

Youngest and "baby" of the Spanish air force.

Well known throughout the British political world, especially Liverpool.

The second part John had marked "For publication December 23rd." It read:

Oxford student escapes from Fascist prison.

Five days of horrifying torture.

Amazing allegations.

Beastly, barbaric treatment of women.

Fascists rejoice "Air-France" airplane down.\*

Franco no longer chief of the rebels.

German generals in charge of airports.

Italians and Germans erect military headquarters.

Mass supplies of planes, tanks, canons (sic), machine guns and rifles.

Italians parade in uniforms of the rebels.

Germans wear the uniforms of their own country.

Moors rejoice in cutting up children and women.

Scandalous torture of innocent people.

American citizen held prisoner without reason.

Franco under orders of two Germans and Italian chiefs.

We who had known John in Madrid folded the sheets and placed them in our pockets without comment. But one young English correspondent, just arrived on the job, cabled a long story on each of the release outlines and his newspaper, we heard, used them!

John subsequently returned to England. I often have wondered whether he went back to Spain again.

The government fully understands news values. It knows that a positive statement is worth much more than a denial. It may make any claim it wants to, no matter how unfounded it may be, and the claim, because it is an official statement from a recognized government, will be given the play accorded such statements.

Getting the jump on the enemy by charging this or that

\* This apparently referred to the shooting down, by fighting planes which the government at the time charged were Franco's, of a tri-motor passenger ship on the Air-France line between Madrid and Paris. A Loyalist pilot admitted to me that his own squadron shot the passenger ship down, mistaking it for an enemy bomber.

is one of the favorite resorts of the Valencia government. Of course the enemy can deny the claim. But the Valencia statement is "positive" news and will be published first. If the denial is secured shortly after the claim or charge is made and both are available to the editor for the same edition, he will publish the statement and follow it with the denial. This means that the claim or charge will be given prominence under a head and the denial will follow in small type at the end, probably on an inside page. This is not prejudice on the part of the editor—it is simply proper news judgment. There is little or no news in a denial. The great majority of readers form their impressions principally from the headlines. Even if they read through to the end they will have a strong impression formed before reaching the denial. By issuing most of its communiqués late at night the government insures against publication of the denial until the next day. Meanwhile the story will have gained wide credence.

One of the government's most frequent recourses is to employ the communiqué as a herring. When one reads Valencia dispatches telling of unrest and violence in the enemy's ranks he may be certain that tension is high in government ranks. Atrocities attributed to the foe offset reports of Loyalist excesses.

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## CHAPTER XIV

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### What the Correspondent Faces

MOST OF THE FOREIGN CORRESPONDENTS IN LOYALIST SPAIN, it must be said in all fairness, are conscientiously trying to cover the war impartially. At least they went there with that purpose in mind. But they soon discovered that it is virtually impossible to carry out this intention. The helplessness of the correspondents in the face of the constant official deception can scarcely be realized by anyone outside Spain.

There is no communication except for officials between Madrid, Valencia, Barcelona and other points in Loyalist territory. The correspondent in Valencia has no more idea of what is happening in Madrid or Barcelona than if he were in Brooklyn or Timbuktu. The men in Madrid and Barcelona are equally ignorant of what is going on in Valencia. The correspondent must depend entirely upon the official communiqués and upon the news brought by occasional travellers. The recent fighting in the Basque region might just as well have been at the North Pole as far as the Madrid, Barcelona and Valencia correspondents were concerned.

The correspondent has no way of checking official reports. He dare not ignore them, however, for to do so would draw down on him the suspicion of the government as well as the criticism of his own newspaper or agency

which would see the dispatch carried by some competitor. Cable editors at home, until they became aware of this fact, amused us by sending requests which were completely impossible to fulfill. They seemed to think that getting information was as simple a matter as calling the Newark airport to check on the arrival or departure of a transport plane.

One, who must have thought the Spanish war was something on the order of a Union Square riot, sent a cable requesting us to run over to the enemy side for an angle he deemed essential to one of our stories!

Respect for veracity is not one of the cardinal traits of those government officials upon whom correspondents must rely for information when special queries come from their home offices.

A typical example of this, and every correspondent can enumerate myriads, occurred when I tried to check on a query from my New York office asking confirmation or denial of reports from Buenos Aires that President Azana had made preparations for his immediate family to flee Spain. This was before the government put a stop to the delivering of such messages to correspondents. I called press chief Rubio Hidalgo at his office in the state department.

"The Argentine government is quoted as having granted President Azana's application for protection for the members of his family," I said. "The report says Azana's family already has gone to Valencia where it will embark on an Argentine warship. Is there anything in the report?"

"I saw a copy of that message," Rubio replied. "Such a thing is absurd. You can say that it is absolutely untrue."

"Can I quote the state department as saying that the report is not true?" I asked.

"No. Say it yourself. You know it is not true."

"How am I to know?" I insisted. "I haven't seen any members of Azana's family for weeks." Rubio became quite angry at this.

"It is not true, but you can quote no one. If you do not want to say so, it is your business."

Ramon Blardoney, our night man, found the opportunity to send a message that night pinning the denial on the state department. It was a good thing we did qualify the denial. Within a few days a Buenos Aires official reported the arrival there of Azana's entire family on an Argentine warship.

If the foreign correspondents are in the dark as to what is transpiring around them, Spanish newspapermen are doubly so. No attempt is made by the Spanish newspapers to staff the war. The news dispatches of all the newspapers printed in Loyalist Spain are from the same source—the Fabus official news agency—which in turn gets its news from the ministries of marine, air, war and defense. This makes the news sections of the various papers identical except for the captions and editorials. One of the Fabus editors visited me a few hours after Malaga had fallen.

"Do you have any news on Malaga?" he asked.

"The other people's radio reported that it fell at 9 o'clock this morning," I told him.

"I heard that and think it must be right," he said. "But the government report we just received says Malaga still is resisting. What is a fellow to do?"

We had a large map of Spain in our office and during the first weeks of the war kept tab on the fronts by the pin and string method. We took the pins off when we were warned that it was not wise for us to have a map so marked that people could see the extent of the Franco-controlled area.

Spanish newspapermen employed by American agencies

were virtually of no help as far as war coverage was concerned. They could not be sent to the front because any Spaniard not a militiaman risked penalties of espionage if he approached the firing lines. Any adverse news they might bring back if they did succeed in escaping espionage charges would most certainly result in their arrest and possibly more severe treatment on charges of defeatism.

The Associated Press staff in Spain included more than fifty Spaniards. About fifteen of these were attached to our Madrid office as full and part time men. The remainder were string correspondents in the provinces. We received no reports from these correspondents from the beginning of the war. The assistance rendered by the Spanish personnel in the main office was confined to clerical work.

Several of these employees were so afraid of their lives that they refused to leave the office and the protection of the American flag which we had fastened to the iron gratings of the balconies facing the street. They remained inside twenty-four hours a day, eating and sleeping on the premises. We brought them what food we could obtain and they took turns sleeping on several cots we had placed in a back room. The United Press's Spanish staff did likewise.

Earlier in this narrative I said that the American flag saved our office from attack on at least one occasion. It was the flag and the quick-wittedness of our veteran Spanish employee, Arturo Cardona, which turned the trick. There had been some sniping from one of the houses near our building and a group of militiamen decided that the shots had come from our windows. Several of them lined up in the street in front with raised rifles while others prepared to storm the door. Cardona, risking a volley, boldly stepped to the window.

"Do you see that flag?" he shouted. "This is the office

of the naval attaché of the United States of America. You will all lose your heads if you molest this place."

The militiamen, not knowing that the United States had no naval attaché in Madrid, fell back, lowered their rifles and held a hasty consultation. One of them then came forward.

"You will pardon us, *señor*? We did not know that was an American flag. No one behind an American flag would shoot at us. The United States is our friend and we are the friends of the Americans. *Salud!*"

This was before the United States amended the Neutrality Law to include countries engaged in civil war. When it became known that the United States would not help the Loyalists there was a sharp reversal of feeling toward Americans in Loyalist Spain. The arrival of some 3,000 Americans to join the International Brigades again placed us in a favorable light.

The newcomer arriving in Spain to cover the war from the Loyalist side is struck by the flattering reception given him upon his arrival in Valencia. He is overwhelmed with attention from the moment he enters the press office to secure the credentials which will be indispensable to him in his new assignment.

"Not so bad, this," he will say to himself, as he is taken in tow by suave, urbane press chief Luis Rubio Hidalgo, is introduced to everyone and is assured that every facility the government has is at his disposal.

If there is anything—anything at all he may need or desire to make his stay more pleasant or his work more agreeable, he is told, he has only to breathe his wants and they will be fulfilled. A car and chauffeur will be furnished him should he wish to make any trips. A guide and interpreter will help him orient himself. A few magic words spoken by telephone and the hotel accommodations



which the correspondent has been vainly hunting for hours in this overcrowded new capital become instantly available.

Not expecting such magnificent treatment, the new arrival is deeply impressed. But woe to him who is naive enough to believe that all this is merely a display of the fine Spanish hospitality he has heard so much about. He is soon to discover the strings attached to the favors heaped upon him. If the correspondent does as he is expected—if he joins the legion who, from personal conviction or resignation to their lot, have become little more than rubber stamps for Popular Front policies—he will, indeed, find the sailing smooth. He will continue to be a most honored guest, and his assignment will be a series of wonderfully pleasant adventures. But should he show his ingratitude by insisting upon putting into practice the fine old American newspaper tradition of investigating and corroborating the government's news reports before sending them, there will be rough weather ahead.

The government announces that seven enemy planes have been shot down in a certain battle which "greatly improved the Loyalist positions."

The newcomer may have happened to witness that battle and with the aid of binoculars have had an excellent view of the aerial "dogfight" referred to in the official communiqué. But instead of seven planes being shot down his binoculars showed him that the markings on six of the falling planes were distinctly Loyalist markings.

And how, he wonders, could the Loyalists have "improved their positions" when he himself had been caught in the human avalanche of their disorderly retreat? He himself had seen the militia break and run, abandoning their dead and wounded, thick as flies, on the field; he himself had seen the terror-stricken militiamen pile onto the

withdrawing tanks and ambulances in their frenzy to escape the devastating fire. A good three miles had been lost before the officers had succeeded in halting the retreat.

But his news dispatch that night will be expected to relate how seven enemy planes were shot down, and how the militiamen advanced. A communiqué will tell of the "deliberate and careless bombardment of a hospital" by the enemy. The correspondent may want to include in his dispatch that the enemy's fire apparently was drawn to the vicinity of the hospital by the presence of a Loyalist artillery emplacement or munitions dump near it, but he will not. Another communiqué will describe how the population of a certain town on the verge of capture "evacuated it rather than fall into the hands of the barbarians," and how the enemy "fired on the stragglers refugees, killing many helpless men, women and children."

The correspondent may think it proper to say, basing his assertion on his own observations, that the town's evacuation was forced by the militiamen who threatened to shoot anyone "demonstrating sympathy for the enemy by wanting to stay behind." He may feel that it is only fair to say that if the militiamen had stayed at their posts until the refugees had left, covering their march instead of going along with them and exposing them to the fire directed at themselves and at their tanks and artillery units, it might not have happened. But he will not.

If he wishes to remain in the good graces of the government that is his host, he will base his stories strictly on the information contained in the communiqué. He cannot, even if he wishes, investigate all the announcements made by the government. He has no protection against deceit. He must accept these announcements as gospel, without expressing or implying a shadow of doubt as to their veracity.

Moreover, he will not remain a disinterested observer of the war he is covering. He will show his personal sympathy for the cause in many little ways. He will be elated in victory and crestfallen in defeat. Never, under any circumstances, will he intimate, even in private conversation, that he entertains any doubt about the ultimate victory of the Loyalists.

Nor will he let the remark escape him that he is not in agreement with some government policies, such as the ruthless exterminating of political opposition, or that the "democracy" in whose name the Loyalist government is fighting does not correspond with his ideas of democracy.

When the government, worried that its anti-clerical policies may be estranging sympathy abroad, makes one of its periodical announcements that it is "contemplating the re-opening of churches in the near future," the correspondent who wishes to get along will not be indiscreet enough to ask: "What churches?" although he may have seen for himself that not one church in one hundred has escaped destruction and that only their charred walls remain. Nor will it occur to him to ask jestingly where the priests would come from if there were churches to be opened, unless the miracle of resurrection be invoked.

He will not ask these or many other of the perplexing questions that are bound to occur to him even after a short stay in Loyalist Spain. If he wants to get along harmoniously, he will, even though it may cost him some effort, manifest trusting confidence in the Loyalist cause. He will be extremely careful what he writes even if he gets a short leave outside of Spain and feels an urge to let off steam once the fetters of censorship are left behind.

On one of my trips to Paris, a colleague, resting up there after several months of hard work in the war zone, showed

me a list of stories our New York office wanted him to write while he was free of the censorship.

"I can't touch them," he said ruefully. "I've got to go back there."

Except in a few instances the government has not resorted to deportation of refractory correspondents. It is wise enough to know that expelling correspondents is one of the surest ways to estrange sympathy abroad. It has other means, just as effective, of treating such correspondents.

First, it will endeavor to show him the error of his ways. Several little *tête-à-têtes* failing, the "screws" gradually will be applied to the errant one. Unless he sees the light quickly and mends his ways, his life will be made so miserable that he soon will realize his complete inability to do the work his office expects of him. Fearing that his failure to do so may be interpreted wrongly and cost him his job, the only course open to him is to ask to be substituted before he is discredited.

William Carney, correspondent of the New York Times in Madrid for many years, was one of the first to feel the inhospitality of the Loyalists toward newspapermen who could not be "educated" to write as they are expected to write. After a series of clashes with government authorities on stories he had written, Carney's apartment was visited one afternoon by a group of riflemen. Carney opened the *ventanilla*—the tiny peep-window Spanish doors have—and asked what they wanted.

"We want to search this apartment," the squad's spokesman said.

"Don't you see the paper there with the United States consulate seal?" Carney asked, indicating the document all Americans were furnished for their protection.

"That means nothing to us. We are going to search this apartment."

"By what authority do you violate the seal of the United States consulate?" Carney demanded. "I will protest to the government."

"This is our authority," the spokesman said, pounding his rifle on the floor. "We care nothing about the government. If you don't open this door we will break it down."

Carney then admitted the militiamen. His apartment was searched. Finding nothing incriminating, the militiamen departed. When he protested to the Home Office the government professed to know nothing of the incident. Carney was thereafter molested in many ways. He was arrested several times and held for hours without explanation. Finally he received a tip that the government no longer would be responsible for his safety. He quit Loyalist territory at once. Roland Winn, correspondent for Reuter's, similarly had to leave in a hurry. John Allwork, another Reuter's man, left after being arrested seven times. Jane Anderson, American freelance, escaped a firing squad by a hair.

What forms does government pressure take on recalcitrant correspondents? There are many. News contacts suddenly "freeze" and become afraid to be seen talking to you. Invitations to press conferences arrive late or not at all. Important government announcements generally are made late at night. When one is issued, your chief competitor will be notified at once but you will not hear about it until the next day. If you protest, you will be assured that every effort was made to find you, that your phone was busy, or that there had been a "most regrettable error." Your opposition's copy will be given attention immediately upon delivery at the censorship office. Yours will be shuffled to the bottom of the pile. His long distance telephone calls

will come through almost at once. You will have to wait for hours while your deadlines slip past.

These little indications of the government's displeasure with one's work are annoying, but not nearly so effective as the application of the "big club" the government holds over all the foreign news-gatherers. This is its ability to keep any one of them from going anywhere it doesn't want him to go. The "big club" is wielded either by holding up a safe-conduct, without which one cannot leave or enter any Loyalist town or city, or by withholding authorization for the purchase of gasoline. Thus a correspondent can be forced to sit helplessly where he is while his competitors score a decisive beat on some big action story breaking perhaps only a few miles away.

Application of the "big club" is never open and direct. Failure of one's *salvo conducto* to arrive in time to enable one to make the correspondents' car leaving at a determined hour brings profuse apologies for the "unfortunate error" that caused the pass to be "misaid" or "delivered to the wrong address." If one has his own automobile and is not dependent upon the cars in which the others are to be taken to a particular scene of action, he may find himself unable to secure gasoline for it at the government depot. The gasoline supply is carefully guarded by the government and is rationed out in such small quantities that it is almost impossible to have a reserve on hand against such an emergency. When a certain correspondent has incurred ill-favor, it will be discovered at the depot that his purchasing tickets lack the stamped approval of some government official, who, unfortunately, has just left the city on official business and will not return until tomorrow or perhaps next week.

Some of the correspondents working in Loyalist Spain fit in well with the general scheme of things because of

their personal political tendencies. I knew several who were admittedly active "political agents." These not only used all propaganda handed them but helped create stories which they made available to the Ministry of Propaganda for use by other correspondents if desired. In return for this helpful assistance, the government furnished them free living and traveling accommodations and otherwise remunerated them in proportion to the size and importance of the papers they represented. These *agentes politicos* work in close contact with the "political commissars" whose job it is to bolster the militiamen's morale and keep them keyed up to a berserk fighting state. During my stay these were the only correspondents permitted to go near Albacete, headquarters of the International Brigades, and they were sworn to secrecy on what transpired there.

The government, which at that time was protesting the foreign assistance being given Franco, did not want any news to leak out concerning the thousands of foreign soldiers it had recruited abroad. Inasmuch as the only rail communication between Valencia and Madrid passed through Albacete, this restriction forced ordinary correspondents to travel by motor in making the journey back and forth between the permanent and temporary capitals. One of the men from our office in Paris, sent down to relieve a harassed co-worker in Madrid, spent a bad night because the government neglected to tell him about this.

He bought a train ticket to Madrid, and after several hours aboard, as the train neared Albacete, a military inspector came through the cars demanding to see everyone's credentials. My colleague had his *salvo conducto* but no special pass such as the *agentes politicos*. He was told he would have to return to Valencia. He bitterly protested, pointing out that it was the middle of the night and that even if he wished he could see nothing of Albacete from

the train window. The inspector was adamant. At a point a few kilometers outside of Albacete the correspondent was forced to leave the train and was kept under guard there until a Valencia-bound train came along. Fortunately he succeeded in getting a ride next day with an American official of the telephone company who was motoring to Madrid. His discomfiture was not relieved any by the discovery that two other American correspondents with political agent status who were traveling on the same train on free passes given them by the government, were not only not molested, but were permitted to make a stop-over in Albacete.

These *agentes politicos* rarely go near the firing lines or otherwise expose themselves to the danger of capture. Their active rôle in behalf of the government has placed them on Franco's "black list" and they know it. When the fall of Madrid appeared imminent there was a hurried exodus of this group of writers. Later, when it appeared safe, they trickled back.

A few other correspondents, while not taking an active role in the manufacture of propaganda, have such strong personal sympathies with the Loyalist cause that they are incapable of objectivity in covering the war. Their personal feelings are quite evident in almost every dispatch they send. The writing of a certain woman correspondent for a French newspaper became so biased that her paper, after several warnings had proven ineffective, recalled her.

I knew several "special" writers who came to Spain with pre-conceived ideas which no amount of actual evidence to the contrary could possibly change. They saw only what they wanted to see. One of these, a writer with something of a reputation in the United States, came into Loyalist Spain to do a series of articles on the war seven months after it had started. He came to my office. Confessing his com-



plete ignorance of the Spanish language and of the customs of the country, he asked me if I would help him with his series. When I told him that I would be glad to give him any assistance I could, he pulled out a pad and pencil. His first question was:

"What can you tell me about the reported killing of Rightist non-combatants behind the lines—these 'ride' victims we have read about?"

I told him that, unfortunately, there had been excesses.

"Do you know this to be true or is it something someone has told you?" the writer demanded.

I told him that I could hardly make such statements on pure hearsay and had started to describe some of the things we had seen on the tours of the Madrid outskirts, when he leaped to his feet.

"I don't believe it!" he exclaimed. "Nothing anyone can tell me will make me believe it. I think you must be a Fascist!"

Few of the old guard—the correspondents who worked in Spain on regular assignment long before the war—are in Loyalist territory now. Their knowledge of the language and the customs of the country, their wide circle of news contacts, and their acquaintanceship with the political background of the war made it difficult for the government to bring them to heel. They persisted in remembering embarrassing facts which the government wanted forgotten. Their long experience in Spain would not permit them to accept statements directly in conflict with their trained judgment and personal observation. Some of them enjoyed such excellent contacts that, try as it might, the government could not prevent them from coming into possession of information which it was most anxious to keep an official secret.

The Spaniard, by nature a trusting soul, has learned by

sad experience during this war not to talk to new acquaintances, who may well be members of the *Brigada de Investigacion* seeking only to betray him. That effectively keeps the newcomer, should he prove inquisitive, from learning anything he should not learn. With the old-time correspondents it was different. They know many men who, though outwardly pretending sympathy toward the new government to keep themselves and their families from being "liquidated," are secretly its most bitter enemies. Some of these men\* now occupy high posts of authority and responsibility. They are extremely careful with whom they talk, but when they do talk, one may be reasonably sure he is getting accurate information.

I was fortunate enough to enjoy a considerable number of these excellent contacts and used them to good advantage. I was careful enough to protect my sources so that the government never was able to trace my information to them. If I ever caused a single one of my informants to get into difficulties, I am not aware of it. As shall be seen, I got myself into trouble because of some of the stories I wrote from information thus furnished me. It was as a result of some of these stories that I eventually left Spain.

\* On one of the *Raleigh's* trips to Valencia to evacuate American refugees, Captain Edward J. Foy invited me to have luncheon with him on board.

A high official of the Loyalist War Department (whose name and rank I withhold for obvious reasons), came aboard to inspect the ship.

Returning to the dock with him in the *Raleigh's* launch, I saw this official looking back longingly at the ship and its American flag. I said:

"How would you have liked to have stayed on board and gone on to France with the Americans?"

He shook his head.

"One day, perhaps, I will be able to do that, but not now. If I left, my family would suffer the consequences."

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## CHAPTER XV

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### Who Will Win? Sidelights on Conflict

THE QUESTION I AM MOST FREQUENTLY ASKED SINCE MY return from Spain is, of course, "Who is going to win?"

The query almost invariably is supplemented by the assertion that the person making it is inclined to favor the Loyalists' side because he has heard more about that side, but that he has become so confused by conflicting reports in the daily press that he doesn't know what to believe.

A great variety of factors must be considered before one can give an intelligent reply to such a question. One must review the developments thus far and weigh the prospects carefully to ascertain which of the two sides the balance favors. The indispensable requirements for victory are a sufficiency of man-power and materials, unified disciplined action, capable leadership and offensive power.

The Loyalists have plenty of man-power. Thanks to their huge war chest and the aid sold or given them by France, Russia, Mexico and other friendly nations, they have secured war materials in abundance. Yet, after more than a year of bitter struggle, the balance is heavily against them.

The year just ended has seen a long series of important Franco successes in which he took San Sebastian, Toledo, Malaga, Bilbao, Santander, and hundreds of smaller towns and villages; gained naval supremacy by sinking or cap-

turing most of the government fleet and built up his own navy to the point where he can maintain a fairly effective blockade of Loyalist seaports; improved his economic outlook,\* and maintained intact the Nationalist party alliances he started with at the beginning of the war.

The Loyalist balance for the year shows an unbroken series of military defeats, save for the negative victory of Brihuega which left the Nationalists with 3,000 square kilometers of territory they gained before the Loyalist counter-offensive was launched. During the entire year the Loyalists failed to take a single town of importance from the Insurgents. The huge gold reserve the Loyalists had at the beginning of the war has been greatly depleted. Industry, except war industry, has been at a virtual standstill. Internal strife has time and again threatened to wreck the Popular Front. The Nationalists include parties of widely divergent political tendencies such as the Monarchists and *Falangistas*. These have wisely deferred settlement of political questions until after the war. Extremist elements within the Front, on the other hand, have shown no such disposition to wait. Inter-party strife arising principally from the Anarchists' insistence on a revolution concurrent with the war has thus far made futile all efforts toward effective unified action.

Due to the consorship, little news of this inter-party friction has reached abroad. Accounts of the warfare which has flared up in various parts of the Loyalist territory have, with few exceptions, either been smothered completely or prevented from reaching the outside until long after they have ceased to be news. The propaganda de-

\* Nationalist currency is quoted at more than double the Loyalist currency in European exchange markets. When I exchanged my Spanish money in Marseilles, the rate was 115 French francs for 100 pesetas of Franco currency, but only 55 francs for Loyalist 100-peseta notes.

partment has worked overtime and with marked success to minimize the importance of this strife.

The indiscipline and inconsistency of the Anarcho-Syndicalists have been a headache to the Loyalist government from the very beginning of the war.

Opposed in theory to landlords and the collecting of rents, the Anarcho-Syndicalists promptly became landlords themselves by confiscating properties and collecting rents. Avowedly opposed to all government, they lost no time in demanding cabinet representation once they were in a position to do so. Confidence arising from their numerical strength—they claim a membership of 1,500,000 in Spain—led them to become arrogant and insolent in their relations with the other Front parties.

The policy of patience and almost limitless concession the government adopted toward them prevented serious clashes for several months after the war had begun. Then the depredations of the *Columna de Hierro*—the “Iron Column”—a band of some 1,000 armed Anarchists many of whom were ex-convicts, were what finally led to the open rupture now existing between the Anarcho-Syndicalists and the other Front parties, principally the Socialist-Communists. Organized at the beginning of the war, when the government dared not take a strong position against the Anarchists because they formed the backbone of the Loyalist forces, the *Columna* traveled Loyalist territory from one end to the other, plundering and killing in open defiance of the authorities. Their raids, directed principally against small rural towns, became more frequent as the *Columna* became bolder.

The incident which precipitated the series of open clashes between the Anarchists and Socialist-Communists occurred at Valencia when Communists killed one of the *Columna's* leaders in reprisal for the loss of one of the

Communist militiamen at the hands of an Iron Column member. Swearing vengeance, the *Columna* arranged a huge demonstration in Valencia. They escorted the body of their dead comrade through the streets of the Levante capital with a procession of armored cars, shouting defiance at the Socialists and Communists. The main part of the demonstration was scheduled to be held in the Plaza de Tetuan, in front of the Communist headquarters. The Communists were prepared. No sooner had the *Columna* members filed into the Plaza than machine-guns, mounted on top of the Communist headquarters and on buildings on the opposite side of the square, began to chatter. Thirty-two *Columna* men were killed in that blast. The demonstrators dispersed in disorder. Censorship prevented any mention of this incident.

Shortly afterwards the Anarchist organs broke forth in a torrent of protest against what they said was a "deliberate attempt to block the revolution we were promised in return for our support in the elections."

The Communists came back with a plea for the exercise of "common sense" by the Anarchists:

"Win the war first—you will have plenty of time afterwards to carry out the revolution," they said. "What good will it do to have the revolution now if we lose the war?"

"That is impossible," the C.N.T. and F.A.I. replied. "We know what you are planning once the war is ended. We are being used merely as instruments to your end. The first thing you intend to do after the war is eliminate us from the picture altogether. We demand that the revolution be carried out now, in accordance with your original agreement."

When the Anarchists, acting independently and in defiance of the other Front parties and silencing the protests of small landowners who were the first to be affected by

the socialization plan, continued to force their "socialization" scheme on industry in the Loyalist territory, Communist Minister of Agriculture Vincente Uribe called the Anarcho-Syndicalists sharply to task in a public speech.

"The growers are disgruntled and there is danger in their unrest," he said. "When they have harvested their crops they are forced to hand them over without payment. If they protest, their bodies are found next day along some roadway. This is the work of the uncontrollables and must be stopped."

The Anarchist organ *Nosotros* replied to this speech in an editorial indignantly protesting the use of the word "uncontrollables." Quoting Uribe's speech, it said:

"These words, *compañeros*, were not spoken by General Queipo de Llano in a Sevilla broadcast. They were spoken by our own Minister of Agriculture. He calls us 'uncontrollables' because we insist that our revolution be carried out while it can be carried out. We are not the 'uncontrollables'—those who cannot be controlled are our enemies within the government who are seeking to defeat our objectives."

In another editorial *Nosotros* said:

"The Popular Front knows that without us victory is impossible. It seeks to placate us with promises, but we know that even now an army within an army is being mobilized to crush us when the war is over, or, perhaps, if the other Front parties deem it expedient, before the war has ended. We must organize more strongly and defeat this monstrous scheme. We must have our revolution now, while the time is ripe. If we wait, it will be too late."

The government *WAS* organizing an "army within an army" to deal with the Anarchists, moulding it secretly from trusted *carabineros*—frontier guardsmen. But this spe-

cial army had not yet been sufficiently developed to throw against the powerful C.N.T. and F.A.I. forces. Party hatreds were mounting and there was a continuous war of reprisals. The Anarchists and Socialist-Communists killed each other's men with regularity, one or two each day. But there was no major open clash until the incident at Fatarella, in Taragona province, late in December.

Here the Socialist-Communists U.G.T., enraged by the murder of several of its men during brawls with the C.N.T. and F.A.I., disarmed the Anarcho-Syndicalists and drove them from the town. Securing reinforcements in the Taragona capital, the Anarchists hurried back and laid siege to Fatarella. Order was re-established only after a score or more had been killed in two days' fighting.

The government, fearing to reveal the true nature of the disorder, but forced by the flood of alarming rumors to say something, announced that the rioting had been provoked by "Fascists inside and outside our ranks." The Fatarella diocesan head and a dozen other Rightist prisoners were executed on charges that they had fomented the trouble from their cells. Shortly afterwards another outbreak occurred at Cullera, just south of Valencia. Two days later Gandia, a neighboring village, saw a similar clash. The government was able to subdue these isolated uprisings, but it prevented all mention of the disorders in the Spanish press lest they prove the spark for the general conflagration it feared. A short time later there was bitter fighting at Puigcerda, near the Franco-Spanish frontier. Here Anarchists barricaded themselves within the town and set up a "libertarian" régime. A large force of assault-guards from Barcelona, headed by Premier Tardellas of the Generalitat, stormed the village and arrested the revolt leaders.

The big clash which had been brewing finally broke out



in Barcelona in May. The P.O.U.M.—Trotsky Communists who had broken with the followers of Stalin in the regular Spanish Communist party—joined the Anarchists in a mass uprising.

The government, however, now had its special army fairly well organized and, rushing it up from Valencia, engaged the rebellious Catalonians. After several days of street fighting in which several hundred on both sides were killed, it succeeded in dominating the movement. The stability of the Valencia government was endangered by this display of force against its own supporters. Premier Largo Caballero was unseated and dropped out of the political limelight, at least temporarily. His removal appeased the four Anarchist Ministers and was well in accord with the wishes of the Communist party. Largo's reputation abroad as the "Spanish Lenin" had proven greatly embarrassing. It had become more and more difficult to explain his presence at the head of a government which was desperately seeking to be recognized abroad as a "democratic" government.

Only a short time before, the anomaly of Largo's position had been shown in strong light. A noted American publisher had sent a questionnaire to both the Burgos and Valencia governments, asking, among other things, what form of government each would adopt in the event of victory. Franco had answered unequivocally that he favored a military dictatorship. It was up to Largo, as Premier, to speak for the Valencia régime. But he could not. If he replied truthfully that his aim was a Union of Soviet Iberian Republics, all the "democracy" pretensions would have been for naught. If he made his reply fit in with the propaganda campaign abroad, his own followers would have repudiated him as a turncoat.

It was a ticklish dilemma; a natural result of the gov-

ernment's attempt to maintain two diametrically opposed positions at home and abroad. Finally the task of answering the questionnaire was given to Minister of State Alvarez del Vayo, who had been able to straddle the issue without jeopardizing domestic confidence or the moral support of world liberals.

Juan Negrin, former Minister of Treasury under Largo and a friend of the foreign correspondents, was named Premier to succeed Largo. I had known Negrin for several years and sincerely admired him. Even after the stocky, bespectacled multi-linguist became a cabinet minister he continued his nightly visits to the Miami bar for his after-dinner liqueur. I often chatted with him there, getting angles on the financial situation.

The presence of a moderate Socialist at the head of the new government was a boon to the régime because it strengthened the fiction of a "democratic" government abroad. Largo's ouster, however, produced fresh troubles. Feeling much stronger after its critical first test of strength against the Catalonian Anarcho-Syndicalists, the government had ousted the Anarchist members of the Catalonian Generalitat government and followed this up by excluding the Anarcho-Syndicalists from representation in the new Negrin cabinet.

Largo, it had been thought, would step down gracefully, but, bitterly disappointed and angry, the former Premier immediately began plotting his return to power. The Anarchists, equally bitter at their being deprived of a voice in government, suddenly threw their support to Largo, who adopted as his new campaign slogan the Anarchist cry "We want our social revolution now."

Largo has another important, if less powerful, ally, in the outlawed P.O.U.M. Trotskyites. The disappearance and reported murder of the Trotskyite leader, Andres Nin,

added to the bitterness of the P.O.U.M. Nin, one of the foremost revolutionaries in Spain, was arrested last June when the government, at the behest of the Stalin Communists, raided the P.O.U.M. headquarters in Barcelona and arrested many of the members.

It was announced that Nin had been taken first to Valencia and then to Madrid for imprisonment pending trial. When the P.O.U.M., supported by the Anarchists and many of Largo's extreme Socialists, became more and more insistent in their demands that Nin be produced and tried, and the government was unable to dodge the issue any longer, it issued a communiqué to the effect that Nin had "escaped" from the Madrid prison with his guards. Even the Anarchist newspapers were obliged to print this version, but Anarchist and Trotskyite circles were convinced that Nin was murdered enroute to Madrid, and he became a martyr.

Largo regards the present government as bourgeois and counter-revolutionary, and is frankly working for its overthrow. With the opposition to the Negrin government now three-way, neutral observers do not believe that a decisive program can long be avoided. The well-disciplined Communists supporting the Negrin cabinet are confident that if an open fight eventuates, as it seems likely to do either before or after the war, it will have the support of a large percentage of Loyalist Spain. The government will be able to count on its "army within an army." Whether this will be able to cope with the powerful labor unions supporting Largo is problematical.

The split in the government's ranks certainly has diminished the possibility of any great, sustained offensive against the Insurgents. It does not seem probable that the Loyalists, so divided, can hope to initiate any important military action. The government is desperately attempting to avoid

an open rift, but a wide open split seems unavoidable. The Anarchists have long been storing arms against the day when this major showdown comes. Occasionally one of these deposits is uncovered and announced as a "Fascist" find. Everyone in Loyalist Spain knows differently.

The Loyalist government has had plenty of able foreign military officers for the mapping of its strategy, but has found that its troops do not fight as well under foreign direction as they do under Spanish officers. This lack of able Spanish officers has been one of the major handicaps of the Loyalist forces. Most of the Spanish officers threw in their lot with Franco at the beginning of the war, and those who failed and were captured were executed. Those who attempted to remain neutral were imprisoned and most of them subsequently "disappeared." Of 300 officers arrested during the round-up of all active and retired military in Madrid, there has been no news since they were removed from the *Carcel Modelo* last October. The "model jail" was evacuated when it appeared that the Insurgents would capture Madrid and rescue the prisoners.

The military prisoners were started for the announced destination of Alcalá de Henares a short distance east of Madrid, where it was planned to hold them as hostages. Few of them arrived. Most of them were executed by the militia just outside Madrid. Hundreds of other "neutral" officers arrested in Valencia and Barcelona might have been used to advantage by the Loyalist command had they not been given the *paseo* by militiamen seeking reprisals for losses incurred during Insurgent bombardments of these two great cities. They knew the difficult Spanish terrain as no foreign officer could know it. Their knowledge died with them.

Few of the capable Spanish officers who could be trusted in command of Loyalist forces still survive. The majority

have been killed in action while attempting to prove their loyalty to the government, or shot by their own men following military reverses. Up to the time I left Spain there had been no news of General Villalba, one of the best of the Loyalist Spanish officers, who had been in command of the Malaga divisions before that city's fall. One report said he had been killed, another that he had succeeded in escaping to Gibraltar with a shipload of refugees.

It was common property in Madrid and Valencia, but not in Barcelona, that the noted Catalan Anarchist leader, Buenaventura Durruti, one of the most valiant of the civilian commanders, was killed by his own men on the Madrid front as reprisal for disciplinary measures which they believed too severe. The autopsy, held secretly, revealed he had been shot in the back at close range. His death was rather a shock to me, for I had come to know him rather well. My first conversation with him was in the Barcelona prison following the October, 1934, revolt. My last was during a luncheon in the Grand Via Restaurant a few hours before he was killed.

General Asensio, former Generalissimo of the whole Madrid area, was relieved from active duty after ordering the execution of a number of Loyalist militiamen for retreating in the face of the Nationalist drive on Madrid. His demotion followed, by two days, a statement he made to me in Arranjuez that he had determined to enforce discipline "whatever the cost." General Sebastian Pozas, Asensio's successor, likewise lasted but a short time as Generalissimo because, if the story then current in military circles was true, he insisted on taking an active part in the mapping of Madrid defense plans instead of obediently following the orders of the professional foreign commanders directing Madrid military activities.

In amiable old General Miaja, who succeeded General

Pozas, the government found no such objectionable qualities for many months. Up to the time of the short-lived Loyalist offensive in July, which the government had hoped would result in the lifting of the siege of Madrid, Miaja was ideally suited for the post of Generalissimo. Happy with the fame he had achieved as the "Savior of Madrid," he never let his own judgment clash with that of his advisers, and devoted most of his time to preparing press conferences. While Miaja was thus complacent he held his post. But when, during the unsuccessful July offensive, Miaja saw that thousands of his men were going to be sacrificed and urged that they be withdrawn before the enemy counter-offensive was launched, he was relieved of his command. The government's own report later showed the offensive cost 20,000 casualties. Colonel Alberto Ortega succeeded Miaja, but Miaja was quietly reinstated a short time later. He has had little to say since then.

During the purge of the P.O.U.M., Commander Rovira, a P.O.U.M. member who was in charge of the twenty-ninth division on the Aragon front following the successive deaths in action of two Italian anti-Fascist commanders, was abruptly ordered to report to headquarters in Barcelona just as he had an offensive against Huesca and Zaragoza prepared, and was arrested. This action was carried out by the Communist chief-of-police of Barcelona, Miguel Ortega, without consulting any member of the government. Minister of Defense Prieto was so incensed that he relieved Ortega of his duties and appointed a new chief-of-police, Gabriel Moron. Commander Rovira was not reinstated. The Aragon offensive, which Rovira had planned to relieve pressure on Santander, was a signal failure.

The retirement of General Kleber from the Madrid front was the first of a series of difficulties the Loyalist

government had with its imported officers. Kleber, Canadian-naturalized native of Austria who received most of his expert military training in Russia, was one of the best technicians the Spanish Communist party brought to Spain. Supposed to have been regarded by the Communists as one of their most valuable bargaining weapons in the securing of political concessions, Kleber had been the real brains behind the Madrid defense during the most critical days of the siege. He was withdrawn by the party when certain concessions it expected were not forthcoming. Largo Caballero succeeded in effecting an agreement whereby Kleber's services were to be loaned to the then beleaguered Malaga.

Kleber went to Malaga with the understanding that he was to be placed at the head of all Loyalist forces in that area. When the Communist party found that he was to be only a company commander it refused to let him take the post. When I left Spain Kleber, dressed in civilian clothes, was vacationing in the Hotel Victoria in Valencia. General Kleber enjoyed a long respite but later was assigned to a division fighting on the Aragon front.

General Hans, another capable military man imported by the Loyalists to succeed Kleber, was directing the Madrid defense when I left Spain. Since then I understand the commands have again been shifted.

Marshal Foch said: "In war, it is always necessary to advance."

The neutral military observers with whom I kept in close contact while in Spain were amazed at the almost total lack of offensive power shown by the Loyalist militiamen. Despite their numbers and their equipment, they have not been able thus far to make a single important advance. Planes, tanks and artillery are important assets to any army, but the military observers insisted, and developments

seemed to have borne them out, that actual ground gaining depends on the morale of the infantry.

The government spent much time and money endeavoring to create an army capable of taking a sustained offensive, but despite periodical announcements to the effect that this had now been accomplished and the "great general offensive" would not long be delayed, there were no indications of it when I left Spain, nor have there been up to this time.

Even a dangerous salient such as Franco has maintained at Teruel, a long finger of thinly protected Nationalist territory jutting deep into Levante, has been proof against the Loyalists' frequent attacks. (The latest, led by the International Brigades, succeeded in capturing Brunete, but failed of its main objective—Zaragoza.)

Oviedo has been surrounded on three sides since the beginning of the war. The Loyalists have not been able to complete the circle. Zaragoza, Huesca and Cordoba have been within a stone's throw of the Loyalist militiamen for a full year now, but have resisted successfully.

This lack of offensive power on the part of the Loyalists has enabled Franco to hold his 1,250 miles of front with but small retaining forces. Only when the Loyalists have amassed tremendous strength and attacked one of these small forces in a surprise manoeuvre has the line wavered. A vigorous counter-attack has generally regained lost ground and something more.

Up to this time the Loyalists have depended almost entirely on the International Brigades when the fighting has been toe to toe. The Brigadesmen saved Madrid in November last year, when the Spanish Loyalists gave it up for lost. They came to the rescue again in March, halting a Loyalist rout which would have enabled the Insurgents to encircle Madrid. It was the International Brigadesmen who



formed the shock troops in the desperate drive launched July 5th to lift the siege of Madrid.

This last attempt was the most formidable effort at an offensive that had been made by the Loyalists up to this time. We shall see how it fared.

The object was to capture Navalcarnero, on the main line of Rebel communications. Navalcarnero is a strongly fortified town about thirty-five miles southwest of Madrid. The Loyalists did the fortifying when it was their territory, and they did an excellent piece of work. Concrete gun emplacements, multiple lines of trenches protected by many barbed wire entanglements and deep, bomb-proof dug-outs were built by the Loyalist militiamen during August, September and the first part of the October of 1936. Most of the fighting then was being carried on along the highways, and Navalcarnero commanded the southwestern approach to the capital.

We who saw the miracle of fortifications there did not believe the Rebels would be able to get past Navalcarnero. True, they had been making great progress across Estremadura, but they had not come up against such a line of fortifications as was here. The neutral military observers looked over the place and nodded in approval. Here Colonel Yague's columns could be held up for weeks until they spent themselves and were forced to fall back. It was the best piece of work the Loyalists had done by way of protecting the capital.

What happened is well known. Three hours of aerial and artillery preparation, a twenty-minute infantry assault, and Navalcarnero was in the hands of the enemy. Later they were to show again their attacking force when they broke through the famous *El Gallo* fortifications protecting Bilbao, the vaunted "Ring of Iron" into which had gone nine months of work.

Since its capture in the middle of last October the Rebels had used Navalcarnero as a base. By taking it, and driving westward toward the Toledo road from Sesena, the Loyalists could pinch off the enemy in University City and in the areas immediately west of the capital. Either they would be forced to withdraw before the pincer movement was completed, or they would be trapped in a great pocket and exterminated. Clearing up this sector would force the Rebels back out of artillery range and would be a great step toward lifting the siege of the capital.

Plans for the offensive were carefully laid. One hundred thousand men, including the famous Abraham Lincoln and George Washington battalions of Americans, the Lister mixed brigades of French, English, Polish and seasoned Spanish militiamen, were quietly mustered. The direction of the thrust was kept a deep secret. On July 5 it was launched.

Tons of bombs were loosed by squadrons of bombing planes on every point within a great triangle bounded by points southwest of the Escorial, Navalcarnero and Majadajonda. Then the Loyalist troops crushed forward, supported by dozens of tanks and all the artillery they could crowd along their lines. The surprise of the attack caused the relatively small Nationalist retaining forces to fall back. On to Brunete the Loyalists pushed, carving for themselves, from the territory they had lost last fall, a huge triangular salient with Brunete as its spearhead.

The Rebels rallied and sent for reinforcements. In the most desperate battle which had been fought thus far in the war, Brunete was recaptured and the Loyalists pushed back. The Rebels turned the counter-offensive into an offensive and the siege of Madrid was still on.

While the Loyalists were stubbornly trying to keep from losing more territory in the sector, the Nationalists took

advantage of the fact that the Loyalists had their picked troops in the Madrid area; by two other offensives they netted nearly a thousand square miles of new territory! They broadened their Teruel salient to extend some 700 square miles southwestward, into Cuenca province. Pushing up from the Cordoba sector, they gained nearly 200 square miles of new territory there.

Scarcely had the Loyalist offensive been thrown back when Franco shifted his motorized columns back to the northern sector and renewed his attack on the narrow strip of Loyalist territory west of Bilbao, where there were no International Brigades. In a little more than a fortnight he had cleaned up more than fifteen hundred miles of that strip, capturing Santander, the last important stronghold of the Loyalists on the Bay of Biscay.

Before Bilbao fell, draftsmen checking the map of Spain to see how the armies stood as to ground actually occupied found that the Nationalists were in possession of 67.2 per cent of all Spanish territory. The new gains made since then have (at the time this is being written) extended the Nationalist control to something more than 70 per cent of the total area of Spain and its possessions. Franco holds Spanish Morocco, the Canary Islands, and all of the Balearic Islands except Menorca.

As to man-power resources, the Nationalists hold a small advantage. The Loyalists control the more populous areas. The Nationalists have approximately 14,000,000 of Spain's 24,000,000 inhabitants. The government has almost every able-bodied man between the ages of 16 and 45 in service either at the front or engaged in war industries. Franco, believing that a huge untrained army is a hindrance, has thus far used only a small percentage of his civilian recruits. These have been given a thorough military training before being sent to the front.

Both sides have about the same amount of foreign assistance. Although no figures were available, the government has about 110,000 Russians, French, German, Italian, American, Polish, English, Czech and Bulgarian volunteers fighting for it by the spring of 1937. About 35,000 of these have been estimated to have become casualties up to this time, leaving some 75,000 still in action. Observers with Franco report that there are about 60,000 Italians and between ten and fifteen thousand Germans fighting on their side.

At the time I left Spain, most of the military observers believed the fall of the Spanish capital would be only a question of time. They believed Madrid's capture would prove the turning point of the war. Should Madrid fall, they believed the great Loyalist re-entrant in central Spain would immediately collapse. Valencia and Barcelona, they felt, could not long resist if isolated. Correspondence with some of them recently shows they have not changed their opinions.

When this was being written there remained a small strip of Loyalist territory in the vicinity of Gijon. Once this strip is conquered, Franco no longer will need to maintain an army in the north. He will be able to shift the more than 100,000 men he has there, to central Spain or elsewhere. The ill-fated Loyalist offensive launched in July was a supreme effort to lift the Madrid siege before Franco could throw the full weight of his forces against the capital.

The Loyalists' only apparent possibility of victory now lies in their ability to blast open their re-entrant in the Extremadura section clear through to the Portuguese frontier, thus separating Franco's northern and southern armies, and then rolling up his flanks. Since there are not sufficient foreign volunteers on the Loyalist side to carry out

such a big scale manoeuvre, and the Loyalist militia have thus far shown no indication that they are capable of developing the necessary offensive strength, the only apparently possible solution would be the open supplying by some foreign power of the man-power needed.

This, then, has been my reply when I have been asked who will be the ultimate victor. My opinion, based on eight months of observation in the Loyalist war zones, interpreted in the light of three and one-half years of experience in reporting events leading up to the war and fortified by the opinions of competent neutral military observers whose judgment is not influenced by propaganda or wishful thinking, is that, as things now stand, open intervention by some foreign power is apparently the only eventuality which would render possible a Loyalist victory.

Not a few of the neutral observers are convinced that the Valencia government has long seen things in the same light. Certainly this would explain the frantic efforts it has made to secure Anglo-French intervention, and its apparent willingness to listen to proposals for mediation when hope of intervention seems slight.

No man who has seen the bitterness of the Spanish war and sensed the hatreds that it has kindled could entertain much hope for peace by mediation. During the first few months of the war, perhaps, such a plan might have been put into effect and saved countless thousands of lives. Now it seems impossible. Unless some miracle occurs, it is a war to the finish and much more blood will flow. Should the Valencia government upset the calculations of the observers and win the war, it is almost inevitable that it will have another war on its hands. The threefold opposition of the Anarchists, Trotskyites and Largo Caballero's Revolutionary Socialists to the present régime is but slightly less than their hatred for General Franco.

There is no talk in Loyalist Spain of democracy or modified capitalism in the event of victory. Although the government maintains some of the forms of democratic government, the power is in the hands of the violently radical groups which would permit no return of capitalistic democracy of any kind. Even if the government wanted to do so it would be virtually impossible for it to restore private ownership. The economic system of Loyalist Spain is now neither democratic nor capitalistic. It is essentially communistic, and more radical than present-day Russian Communism.

Just before the war broke out I interviewed Julian Besteiro, gentle, soft-spoken philosopher who heads the Moderate Socialist party in Spain. The interview was held in the modest little home Professor Besteiro built near the end of the Castellana boulevard in Madrid. A socialist congress was scheduled to be held in August (1936) and a bitter fight was pending for leadership of the party. It was split three ways, with Francisco Largo Caballero heading the extreme Left group, Indalcio Prieto the center group, and Besteiro the Right faction. I wanted Besteiro's views on the outcome of the congress.

"I do not think I have a chance," he told me. "Since the elections, the extreme Left has won away most of my followers. Prieto is clever and is holding out to have the congress staged in Asturias, where his influence is greatest. If he succeeds, he probably will win, because relatively few delegates can make such a long trip. I think Largo Caballero probably will have things his own way, however."

"And after that?" I prompted.

"Who can say? Largo swings toward Communism, but the Spaniard is too much of an individualist to submit long to regimentation. Stormy days are ahead for Spain. I am

planning to retire from politics if they take a too decided Left trend, and devote my remaining years to my teaching at the university."

The congress never was held because the war broke a month before it was to open. Besteiro's prophecies have in a large measure come true. Spain's "stormy days" were more stormy than he ever imagined they would be. The calm has not yet come. But the great mass of the people in Loyalist Spain is sick of the war and will welcome any solution which brings peace. The great majority of the masses is hostile to Fascism. It is equally hostile to violent ideologies which justify murder and destruction. Those living deep within Loyalist territory are powerless even to suggest such a thing as surrender or arbitration, but the relative ease with which Franco captured Bilbao and Santander was indicative of an increasing willingness to capitulate under any terms.

Only recently, Catalonia, disillusioned and dispirited, was reported to have sent emissaries to Franco to talk over terms of surrender. These reports may have been unfounded, but the Loyalist government placed sufficient credence in them to threaten to send International Brigades against the Catalonians should any such agreement be negotiated.

Liston Oak, an American who formerly headed the American section of the Loyalist government's propaganda service, told me when he arrived in New York:

"I left Valencia because there is no longer any semblance of democracy there. If the government wins, a Communist dictatorship will be established. Recent developments have split the government forces to such an extent that victory will be possible only if the labor unions throw out the Communist elements controlling the government and take power in their own hands."

And what will the winner of the war get, whichever side wins? The Minister of Air, Navy and National Defense, Prieto during a chat at the Hotel Ingles in Valencia, epitomized the thoughts of many observers when he told me:

"Whoever wins will get nothing but the honor of winning. This is not like the ordinary war where there are reparations or territorial acquisitions. The side which wins this war will inherit only a pile of ruins and the responsibility of salvaging a bankrupt nation. It will take at least twenty-five years for Spain to get back to normal."



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## CHAPTER XVI

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### Adios, Espana! A Last Interview

I HAD HOPED TO BE ABLE TO WITNESS THE OUTCOME OF THE Spanish war. My stay in Loyalist territory unfortunately was terminated rather abruptly. I had been warned long before by a good friend in the State Department that I should "watch my step"—that my frequent clashes with the censorship "had made a most unfavorable impression." My reply to that warning had been that I was only doing what I felt was my duty—that I was trying to cover my assignment as objectively as I could.

The warning was repeated after I had a new set-to with the censors over the elimination of phrases qualifying government hand-outs as such.

By government orders, censors began striking from our copy such qualifying phrases as "the government claimed" or "according to the government" such-and-such a thing happened. The correspondents under this regulation must accept on their own responsibility any government assertion, no matter how controversial it might be. It is strictly against Associated Press rules to send controversial matter without duly qualifying it. When my protests against the elimination of qualifying phrases bore no results, I advised my office of the new situation in a letter carried out by secret courier. Once apprized, it was easy for the New York cable desk to insert the qualifying phrases where

they belonged. My friend told me the government had noticed these insertions and had guessed what had happened.

I noticed a distinct coolness on the part of censors whenever I walked into the press office, but thought they would "get over it." They might have, had I not then done the unforgivable thing. The two chief "taboos" were the inter-party friction within the Popular Front and the part foreign intervention was playing on the Loyalist side. I ignored the taboos and wrote stories about both.

The internal strife, which I mention more extensively in another chapter, had then reached alarming proportions. There had already been open clashes between the Anarchists and Socialist-Communists at Fatarella, Cullera, Gandia and other points. The Barcelona uprising had not yet taken place, but observers knew that a major showdown was inevitable. The two great armed camps were sizing each other up in preparation for such a showdown. Under the pretext of raising funds for Loyalist hospitals, they staged, in Valencia, on successive Sundays, demonstrations which were nothing more than displays of their respective strengths. The situation had reached such a critical point in Valencia that the government feared the Anarchists would attempt to seize the city. On four successive nights when the tension was greatest, forces of 300 assault-guards armed with machine-guns were stationed at the Valencia telephone exchange, as a precaution against any effort to paralyze the communication system of which Valencia was the key.

In my humble judgment, this was news. I wrote a story about it under a Hendaye date-line, hanging it on the old familiar "well informed travelers reaching the frontier reported," etc. A week later I was called to the Ministry of State. A sub-secretary chatted about the weather and

other things and then his manner changed. He showed me a clipping of the story.

"The Associated Press has a very astute man in Hendaye," he remarked sarcastically. "Can you tell me who he is?"

"I really wouldn't know," I said vaguely. "One never meets all the men in an agency."

"Whom do you think you are fooling?" he then demanded. "Don't you suppose we know who wrote this?"

I turned and walked out of his office.

Everyone in Spain knows that virtually all the planes used by both sides are of foreign manufacture and that very few of the pilots on either side are Spaniards. In the case of the side I was on there were practically no Spanish planes or pilots from the beginning of the war. There was no Loyalist aviation force until English and French flyers, lured by fantastic salaries, arrived on the scene. These later were reinforced by Russians, Americans and pilots of other nationalities. Everyone in Loyalist Spain knows this, just as everyone knows that virtually all the arms and ammunition\* being used on either side are supplied by nations friendly to that side. There were not enough munitions in all Spain to keep a war going for more than a few days or weeks. War materials, either ready for use or in a form readily convertible into the finished product, have been pouring into Spain in a constant stream, non-intervention agreements and border patrols notwithstanding.

\* One of the Loyalists in the quartermaster's corps told me that one shipment of 20,000 Mexican rifles, disguised as "clothing and food for Spanish refugees," was a great disappointment to the government when the guns were uncrated. Instead of being the up-to-date weapons it had expected, the rifles were the old, single-shot type used years ago by Mexican revolutionaries, and required a bastard-size ammunition which the government did not possess. The guns had to be re-bored before they could be passed out.

But the Loyalist government at that time did not want it known abroad that it was receiving such aid. Correspondents were not supposed to think of describing the trucks and trainloads of men and munitions coming into Spain. They were supposed to keep their eyes closed judiciously when boatload after boatload was brought to Loyalist ports.

When my office wired me asking for a story about the formation of the Abraham Lincoln Battalion by American volunteers at Barcelona, and I asked press chief Rubio Hidalgo for information about it, he replied: "Tell your office that it is a lie. There is no Lincoln battalion and there are no American volunteers." Later the Lincoln Battalion was to gain fame as one of the finest fighting units on the Loyalist side. I thought all this would make a good story and I wrote about it, ignoring the taboo.

When this story, also smuggled out of Spain, reached print, the "big club" which had been waving menacingly over me, came down with a bang. My unpopularity at the press office was something to marvel at. Official sources drew away from me as though I had leprosy. I could not secure safe conducts or means of transportation to go anywhere. All the annoying little tricks the government knows how to play to irritate the correspondent were tried on me. But still I hung on.

I had cultivated the friendship of several of the censors with occasional "treats" and small presents. These had been accepted gratefully but now the recipients developed a fear of being seen in my company. A young Frenchwoman employed at the censorship frequently had taken cocktails with me but she now told me it would not be advisable for her to continue. And Rudolph Selke, an Austrian censor to whom I sent a banknote not as a bribe but as a

sign of my appreciation for tips on late communiqués, turned it over to his chief.

A state department messenger appeared at my door with an envelope. It contained the banknote I had sent Selke and another of the same denomination. A note signed by press chief Luis Rubio Hidalgo read:

My Esteemed Friend:

I greatly appreciate the friendly attention you have shown us in the person of our comrade Selke. I interpret it as a gentle token of your satisfaction with our work as censors. We, likewise, feel that way with your uncommon merits as correspondent, and particularly with your subtlety. We feel therefore the necessity of reciprocating your gesture, begging that you accept, together with the present, which we return, this small token of our appreciation.

The letter was signed "Your's very attentively." I sent the messenger back with the "obsequio" for me, knowing that my prestige had not been helped any by the incident.

Two members of the Brigada de Investigacion, one a Pole and the other a Czech, posing as newspapermen, took to dropping in for little visits at my apartment. Their visits stopped when I unmasked them one day. They knew too little about the business they professed to follow, as they themselves said when they admitted their identity. I then became aware that I was being "shadowed" everywhere I went. I paid no particular attention to this until my friend in the State Department tipped me that I was considered such a liability that it was quite possible "an accident" might happen to me at any time. In fact, "one was looking for me." Perhaps I ought to leave Spain as quickly as I could.

For the first time I began to do some serious thinking. A bullet had come through my window one night shortly

before but I had thought it was a stray. It probably was, of course. Shortly after that a man had been shot and killed by unknown gunmen as he walked near my home one dark night. I had attached no special significance to it. I now began to link these and other occurrences which previously had not disturbed me. I thought of Baron Borchgrave and other inquisitive souls whose bodies had been found in shallow graves. Whether my fears were well-grounded or not I do not know and probably never will. But when an "accident" starts "looking for someone" in Spain, it generally finds him. I didn't mind taking my chances at the front. This was different. I decided that the tip should be taken without delay and acted accordingly.

I secured permission from the government to go to Paris "for a short respite." The safe-conduct issued me specified that I go through Barcelona to the French border, but Counsellor Thurston of the American embassy, who knew of my plight, secretly arranged with the British embassy to have me taken to Marsilles on a British destroyer.

Our own ships having completed the work of evacuating all the Americans, except those who had to stay, were avoiding Valencian waters. I was taken to the dock in an embassy car and boarded the British destroyer H. M. S. Brazen. It was farewell to Spain.

In addition to the English secretary I mentioned before, and some thirty foreign refugees, aboard the Brazen were two admitted deserters from the International Brigade, Lawrence Mullens of Canada and Niagara Falls, New York, and Tim Keenan of Dublin.

They had enlisted in the Loyalist army, they said, on a Spanish consular agent's promises of "good pay" for services as "railroad engineers." They said they had been advised, on entering Spain, to destroy their English pass-

ports as these "might become embarrassing if anything happened." They did so on the promise they would be supplied with Spanish passports "any time they desired to leave." After several weeks at Albacete, the International headquarters, they said they were handed rifles and ordered into front line duty. When they protested, they said, they had been reminded they now had no passports and were, to all intents and purposes, Spaniards; as such, they would be shot if they attempted to desert.

By altering the dates on their railroad passes to Valencia they had been able to get to the coast. Without passports they found there was no way of leaving the country. They appealed to the English embassy, temporarily stationed in Valencia, but were told their plight was the result of their own actions and the English government could do nothing for them. They then went to the English consulate. Consul W. C. Sullivan, noted for his success in saving the lives of scores of nuns and priests by smuggling them aboard English warships touching Valencia, was more compassionate. He let them remain in the consulate four days until the *Brazen* arrived, and he had even brought them food and cigarettes.

They told me that hundreds of French, Polish, Belgian and Czecho-Slovakian members of the International Brigade who had joined on conditions similar to theirs, wanted to leave Spain but could not because they had destroyed their passports. Even though they escaped from Albacete, they would be caught before they could reach safety across some frontier.

While I was in Paris en route home I went out to see Spain's No. 1 political exile, former president Niceto Alcalá Zamora.

From luxury in the presidential palace of Madrid to poverty in walk-up quarters in a shabby Paris back-street

was the price ebullient Spanish politics exacted of the one-time "hero of the new republic." The man who fought for years against monarchical opposition, braving prison and persecution that the republic he conceived might come into being, was one of the first to be discarded by the Front upon its ascendancy to power. Starvation in exile, the embittered old man told me, was the best he could expect as the reward for his long years of struggle for Iberian democracy.

"The men who are now the government in Spain were once my best friends," he said sadly. "They were satellites of mine. I brought them up from nothing to positions of wealth and importance. Without me they would have been nothing. Forgetting all this, they disowned me completely when political expediency demanded they override the Constitution and forget their ideas of democracy.

"It was indeed fortunate for me I happened to be out of the country when the war broke out last July. I do not doubt but that I would have been killed if I had stayed in Madrid. They hated me because I defended the republic against the agitators who labored night and main to tear it down. When the Extremists found I could not be corrupted they worked for my overthrow. They succeeded in effecting it through the tools they placed at the head of the new government—my former friends. That is gratitude."

Once ranked as one of Spain's most wealthy men, Alcalá Zamora said he had "lost everything—his lands, wealth, even his close personal possessions." The government militia, he said, sacked his Madrid home "destroying everything they could find in a venomous fury of destruction." Among the losses he most lamented was that of nine manuscripts he had completed, including his memoirs as first president of the second Spanish republic.



"This loss is irreparable," he said. "I have no copies and I burned my notes when I had the manuscript ready for publication. They even destroyed a lace mantilla my wife had made, tearing it to pieces and stamping on the threads."

The former president would not commit himself flatly on whom he favored to win the Spanish war, but the old man's next words made his feelings clear:

"I have always been opposed to revolution against legally established authority," he said. "But the present government has no legal standing—it has not even attempted to maintain a semblance of legality since April 7, 1936, when it unceremoniously ejected me from office so that there would be no obstacle to its plans.

"I feel sorry for Spain—sorrier than for myself. This war will mean decades of suffering and poverty for the great masses who have been duped into supporting the interests of a selfish few. My only hope is that it may end quickly so that what little remains of the Spain I love may be saved."

As I left him I thought of the new president, Manuel Azana, who less than a year ago was also a popular hero and who now languishes in virtual exile in the rocky fastnesses of Montserrat near Barcelona. Adored and worshipped, just as Alcalá Zamora was adored and worshipped, Azana already has tasted the bitter dregs of ingratitude.

In December, during an official reception in the Valencia *ayuntamiento* protected by squadrons of Loyalist planes against possible aerial attack, Azana had greeted me with the same old smile and handshake as he had when I had paid my respects to him on previous occasions in his up-and-down career, but I was astounded at the physical change which had been wrought in the man since I last had seen him.

He assured me that "everything was going splendidly,"

but the paleness of his heavy, once ruddy face, and the moist flabbiness of his once firm hand clasp drained the conviction from his assurance. When, at the outset of the Franco revolt, arms had been passed out to the shouting mobs in the Puerto del Sol and at the Casa del Pueblo over Azana's vain protests, the Spanish president had exclaimed mournfully to the Leftist leaders: "You have killed me." Keen mind that he has, he had seen the handwriting on the wall.

He could not have missed the meaning of his subsequent isolation in the old Montserrat monastery, the constant watch maintained over him by frequently changed guards, and the rareness of the occasions when he was consulted. The remarkable change which had come over Azana in the six intervening months showed only too well how deeply his sensitive pride had been wounded at being made a supernumerary in the new political era he had fathered. Now the plaudits were for others—for Largo Caballero and for Prieto and the others who had stepped over him. He was left to get what satisfaction he could in the occasional public appearance and occasional innocuous speech he was called upon to make. Then back to the lonely seclusion of his monastery, where his guards referred to him jestingly and scornfully as "El Rana"—the Frog—because of the two prominent warts on his face. Cruel? There is nothing more cruel than Spanish politics, and jibes at physical defects or infirmities are the least the Spanish politician may expect.

As I walked down the uncarpeted steps of 46 bis Rue Raynouard following my visit with Alcalá Zamora, whose large feet had caused him to be nicknamed "Botas" after he had fell into disfavor, I remembered the words of a government official when I asked him, just before I left Valencia:

"And what will happen to Azana?"

"If Franco wins, he can join the priesthood. If we win, he can jump off a cliff. There are lots of them at Montserrat."

Four Americans, apart from those covering the war as correspondents, stand out, in my mind, above all others for the heroic parts they have played during the strenuous, fear-ridden days of the Spanish tragedy. They are:

Colonel Stephen O. Fuqua, military attaché of the American embassy, beloved by Spaniards and Americans alike for his fearlessness and cool-headedness, his energy and organization ability, and his Louisiana chivalry.

Colonel Sosthenes Behn, president of the I. T. & T., whose courage and resourcefulness has been a source of inspiration to the score of Americans keeping Spanish telephones operating during the war, overcoming all obstacles and braving death that contact with the outside world might be maintained throughout the most difficult days modern communication has ever known.

Captain Frank Cannady, chicken fancier and long-time resident of Spain, for whose voluntary efforts to secure food for them in the face of almost overwhelming obstacles and at the daily risk of his life, the refugees in the American embassy will be eternally indebted.

John Rivera, director of the International Banking Corporation, affiliated with the National City Bank of New York, who, ably assisted by Roger Smith and Benjamin Fulgensi, has kept American finance in Spain as free of snarls as circumstances would permit during this most difficult period.

Although Secretary Eric Wendelin was in acting charge, it was Col. Fuqua's seasoned experience as a veteran of many wars which was principally responsible for the smooth running of the embassy during those nerve-wracking days before it was officially closed.

His military judgment, coupled with an utter indifference to danger in almost daily trips to the front, has enabled the American War Department to receive more reliable, first-hand information on the war than many other governments having military representatives on the scene.

Due tribute also must be paid to Riley Williams, an A.E.F. veteran who served voluntarily as Col. Fuqua's unofficial aide (this was before Captain Townsend Griffiss and Commander Ted Chandler were assigned to cover the air and naval angles, respectively, of the war); to Fred T. Caldwell, vice president and general manager of the Spanish Telephone company; to Clifford Chester who, never losing his high sense of humor, has handled, as vice-president and secretary-general of the company, the difficult work of Colonel Behn and Mr. Caldwell during their absences from Spain; and to the inimitable Kenneth McKim, assistant vice-president of the information department of the I. T. & T., whose gentlemanly treatment of the press has helped us all immensely.

There are many others who deserve a great measure of credit for their courageous cooperation in safeguarding American interests in Spain during this chaotic, hysterical period.

As for the American correspondents conscientiously covering this most gruelling and perilous assignment, no commendation or salary increase could half recompense them for the heroism they have shown in trying to present to American readers a first-hand, day-by-day, reliable account of the successive developments of this ghastly Spanish tragedy.







